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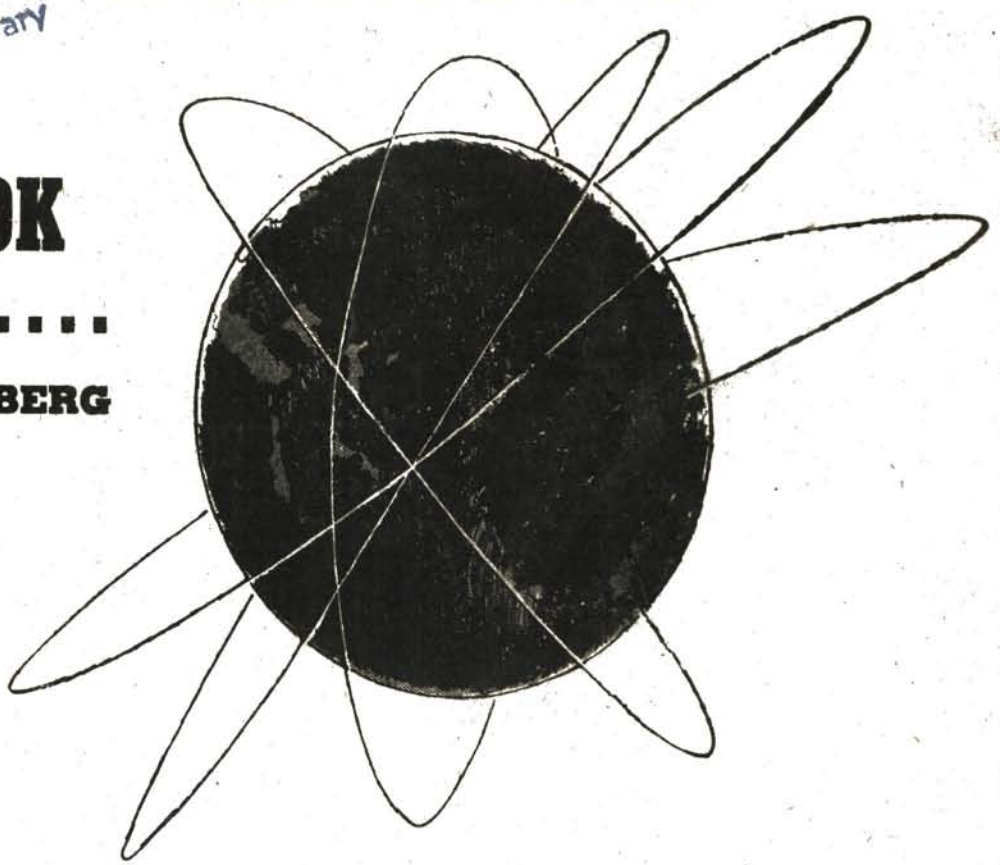
DON'T LOOK NOW BUT....

MILTON LEITENBERG

THE CRASH OF COSMOS 954 AND SOME LESSONS FROM IT



FRANK GETLEIN MYSTIQUES AND MYSTAGOGUES
ABIGAIL McCARTHY ONE OF THE ELECTORS
DAVID K. O'ROURKE TO GRANDMOTHER'S GRAVE WE GO
COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR. DRIVE, HE SAID
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SAUL MALOFF JEWS AND OTHERS
ROBERT PHILLIPS THE SHORT STORY—FOUR COLLECTIONS
JOHN JAY HUGHES THE CATHOLIC CHURCH—A HISTORY
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WHI... IN WASHINGTON PETER KOVLER

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NEWS & VIEWS

Women Priests

Who are those Catholic women who seek ordination to the priesthood? Frustrated, naive little ladies with an identity crisis or driven by a need for power? Not on your life.

According to a two-year study launched after the first Women's Ordination Conference held in Detroit in 1975, they're people with a deep sense of call strengthened by a desire to serve people and humanize their church. They're also strong in their identity as female persons, and, what's more, they show up as psychologically more stable than what is claimed to be a comparable sample of male priests.

The study was directed by Sister Fran Ferder, FSPA, a clinical psychologist at the Quixote Center in Mt. Ranier, Md. Participating were 100 women—72 nuns, 21 single women, seven married women. They comprise a random sample drawn from a list of 211 women who expressed a desire to be priests at the Detroit meeting.

Standing as model for the study, and supplying its startling comparisons, is the 1974 study of American priests commissioned by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and directed by psychologist Eugene Kennedy.

Kennedy, you may recall, found that although American priests were as emotionally healthy as American men in general, a high percentage were "underdeveloped persons." Kennedy described an "underdeveloped" priest as one who had not matured as much as he ought, given his age, careful selection and training, and one who showed a special lack of psychological growth in relationships with others. (He blamed isolation, excessive demands coupled with a minimum of interpersonal support, and unchosen celibacy.)

While there are differences between the women's ordination study and the priests' study, the following comparisons can be made, according to Sister Ferder:

—91 percent of the women studied were healthy personalities as compared to 24 percent of the priests studied;

—eight percent of the women were underdeveloped personalities as compared to 68 percent of the priests;

—one percent of the women were maldeveloped personalities who showed symptoms of psychological illness as compared to 8 percent of the priests.

Are the comparisons valid? Well not really, says Kennedy. "It's an excellent study," Kennedy declared, "and it clearly defines for whom it speaks. But it should be taken for what it is and not be compared to the priests' study."

The difficulty, explained Kennedy, is with the sample. "It is a very select population. It represents women who have a clearly defined, highly articulate interest in being ordained priests. There's nothing wrong with speaking for those women, but the study does not represent women in general in the Catholic church."

The figures, in other words, would be quite different if it did.

Nor do the comparisons, in whatever context, necessarily mean that women would make better priests than men. Not even the sponsors of the study claim that. "But they do suggest," in Sister Ferder's opinion, "that most of the women studied bring a strong and basic psychological health to their ministry." Agreed.

What next? The study will be gotten into the hands of the bishops.

"I'm sure they will welcome the findings of the present study as they continue to discuss the issue of women priests in the Catholic Church," Sister Ferder said.

Wanna bet on that?

Whither Europe?

Ex-*Commonweal* editor William Pfaff reflects again on European politics in *The New Yorker*, this time in terms of the Left.

His thesis: that Europe may have passed a historical watershed, so that it is impossible to think about the political future in old terms.

The Communist party? It "is in steady and probably irreversible decline everywhere except in Italy, and in Italy it seems to be turning itself into something that looks a good deal more like a Socialist party than a Communist party."

Eurocommunism? It "has predictably proved to be the penultimate stage in the disintegration of Western European Communism—implying the threat of ideological dissolution in Eastern Europe as well."

The Socialist party? ". . . In Western Europe, it would seem the great adventure is over. No one resists Socialism. There is no moral opposition. Socialism has become banal, like democracy."

The dilemma of the moderate European left, argues Pfaff, is success. "The society around it, which it purports to reform, is largely its own creation. The Left has won." A modern consensus has been achieved.

This has been a long and gradual process, it is argued, one that began with the downfall of the monarchies two centuries ago. And the achievement has been imposing, bringing the mass of people into a common prosperity as well as into popular representative government.

But there are problems, notes Pfaff.

". . . Europe has reached a point where old and familiar intellectual categories are all but useless in dealing with new and urgent problems in the international economy, in reordering the international division of labor, or in meeting the new problems that develop within societies. The political consensus that has been achieved is on problems already solved."

Another problem: success leaves dissent without a language. Hence the terrorism in Italy and Germany against popular agreement on what life should be.

What has happened over 200 years represents "astounding change," writes Pfaff. But the present is in some ways the past.

"All that we can do now is to understand that the Europe of today is a Europe we have not clearly seen before," he concludes. "What has happened in the past seems now accomplished, and what is about to happen has not begun."

Finis

With this issue I join the ranks of *Commonweal* alumni. For eleven years and four months, I have written this page and shared chores with the house editors. It's been a stimulating time, but it is time to move on.

Jacqueline Wexler (remember Sister Grennan?) said recently that she intended to resign as president of Hunter College in 1980, that 10 years is long enough in the one position. She's got a point.

In any case, after a decade and a bit at *Commonweal* I'm taking myself to Massachusetts' North Shore, where I'll count gulls and do independent writing. I look forward to the change.

And you can look forward to change here. Turnover in an organization as small as ours inevitably translates to real change, however subtle. The time ahead should be an interesting one for *Commonweal* readers. I am anticipating it as much as I hope you will. See you.

JOHN DEEDY

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CORRESPONDENCE

Solzhenitsyn

Staten Island, N.Y.

To the Editors: Frank Getlein's criticism of Solzhenitsyn's Harvard speech is a classical example of *ignoratio elenchi* [July 7].

Mr. Solzhenitsyn is discussing American society; Mr. Getlein, Russian society and history. Mr. Getlein attacks the Russian intelligentsia, and their belief in the salvific mission of the Russian peasantry. Mr. Solzhenitsyn asserts the materialism and lack of spirituality in American society; the "stupor" of television; and the "sensationalism, superficiality and misleading statements of the press, all without rectification." He contends that spiritual life in the West is being destroyed by "commercial interests," and that there is a loss of ethical standards with only legality as a substitute. This he finds an unworthy surrogate.

One of his most interesting conclusions is that in America there are "strong mass prejudices which condemn unfashionable views to obscurity and which result in a self-deluding interpretation of the contemporary world."

It is apodictic that for many Americans, success is their God, and the making of money and the accumulation of things, the reason and justification for existence.

One has only to listen to television and radio to have the news constantly interrupted by the venality of advertisers telling us of the need to have a new car or some philter of magical effect in order to be happy or truly American. To the young who have been subjected to this importunate clamor from the time of understanding, the belief is confirmed that inordinate greed, and the need to satisfy it, is an inherent part of human nature. If it had not been there before this indoctrination, it has certainly been created and nourished.

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'THE GREATEST AMONG YOU . . .'

In the swift, decisive and surprising selection of Albino Cardinal Luciani as Pope we have a good picture of the state of mind of the College of Cardinals, if not necessarily of the actual status of the universal Church.

Clearly the cardinals knew what they did and did not want. Certainly they wanted a good, recognizably "spiritual," intelligent, amiable, Italian, conservative pastor. They did not want: any surprises; a dramatic, more radical plunge into international social problems; a broader "opening to the Left," a conciliatory coming-to-terms with the existence of European —and especially Italian—Communism. Above all, it seems they wanted no bending on the "hot" issues that have commanded a disproportionate amount of media time and emotional energy—abortion, women priests and married clergy.

There was something defensive, as well as conciliatory, about the choice —a sense of pulling the covered wagons into a circle, drawing the line with the letter rather than the freefloating spirit of Vatican II. Thus, if the electors were not moved by actual fear, perhaps the dominant moods were realism—an admission that the hard-line conservatives, Curia and diplomatic corps lacked both the votes and the humble, pastoral image the new papacy would demand—and caution—a foot on the brakes on any theological risk-taking. Just as one prefers steadiness and reliability to brilliant imagination in an astronaut, so the cardinals wanted a firm, predictable hand on the tiller of Peter's leaky barque.

We must therefore acknowledge that the selection of John Paul I, like his mixed name and like the black-white-gray smoke that announced his election, is a mixed solution to the Church's various crises: although he

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has shown deep concern for the poor of his diocese, he has no record of involvement in international social problems; he is wary of modern theologians, worker priests and changes in nuns' habits. His style of anti-Communism may prove too inflexible—not right for Poland, a Communist state where the churches are full, or for Latin America where the bishops have been open to Marxist political and economic theory.

Nevertheless, there is already evidence that the Conclave—if it has not selected a Catholic liberal's dream candidate—has still chosen well. With all its complex international political and economic crises, the Church's deepest crisis may be its pastoral credibility, a central aspect of the crisis of belief. The people do not see in the visible Church the poor, simple, joyous spirit of the gospels. In spite of the holiness and sincerity of Pius XII and Paul VI, most people now alive have not seen, except briefly in John XXIII, a Pope they could easily identify with Jesus. Not while he was carried on a throne, was surrounded and isolated by the triumphalism and protocol more appropriate to a king than a servant, and said "We" when, in fact, he was the only one standing there.

In this sense, John Paul I's first humble gestures, like his earlier urgings to the parishes in Venice to sell their jewels for the poor, and his scaling down of last Sunday's "coronation" to a simpler Mass, are encouraging.

If he does not feel free to revoke *Humanae Vitae*, which he originally opposed before its publication, he can at least maintain his silence on the subject and allow the pastoral solution which emphasizes freedom of conscience to continue. If he will not allow priests to marry in this generation, he can perhaps ordain some mature married men; and he can still revitalize the celibate priesthood so that the way of life will attract and challenge young men sophisticated enough to achieve emotional maturity without marriage and generous enough to give up their own families to serve the family of man. If he will not ordain women, he can still give them administrative power in every level of Church government; he can also make them cardinals, so that august body can more accurately represent the real body of the universal Church.

Albino Luciani once said that the papacy requires three things: "continuous and involved teaching, a dialogue unknown in previous times, and loyalty to the Council." In ways we did not expect, the Church may be in for exciting times as a man who has seldom left northern Italy begins a new dialogue with his own soul and the whole world. His motto might be a sentence from Matthew's gospel for the day he was elected: "The greatest among you will be the one who serves the rest."

WASHINGTON REPORT

MYSTIQUES AND MYSTAGOGUES

There were a lot of old salts around town you could have knocked over with a belaying pin when President Carter not only vetoed the military procurement budget but did so specifically in order to evade the budget's decree that yet another nuclear powered aircraft carrier be built.

The political interpretation of this act of courage was commonly that Carter needed a veto to show he could stand up to Congress. If he did, the military veto was a good one, since ever-growing military budgets are both gospel and food and drink to a clear, permanent and bipartisan majority of both houses. Always have been, always will be. Heavy military expenditure ranks right up there with Mom's apple pie and The Star-Spangled Banner and is better than both because it costs so much money, much of which somehow always ends up spent in the states or districts of strategically placed senators and representatives.

Despite his own formal naval education and his friendship with and admiration for the father of the nuclear Navy, Admiral Rickover, Carter in that veto and in his attack on the proposed new supercarrier showed almost no understanding of the real purposes of our armed forces in general, of the Navy in particular, and of the aircraft carrier especially.

In explaining the veto to the nation, Carter said, for example, that a more rational and efficacious defense system could be built, distributed and maintained by spending the money earmarked for the supercarrier on other things, implicitly on a larger number of smaller naval vessels, explicitly on strengthening the NATO forces under the command of Al Haig, the loyalest loyalist of the Old Nixonians and one of the all-time great military-political climbers and survivors.

The first thing to be said about that is obviously that if you think the American defense system is supposed to be either rational or efficacious, you just don't understand what it is you are Commander-in-Chief of.

The truth is that ever since the end of World War II—a couple of years later, actually—the principal value of the American defense establishment has been symbolic and mystical, not rational or efficacious. This is easily demonstrated. The defense establishment in those years has actually been used to fight two wars

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against small nations offering no rationally perceptible threat to this country, namely Korea and Vietnam. The defense establishment nevertheless managed to lose both wars. Certainly if rationality or efficaciousness had anything to do with our men and machines of war, they could have won both. The wars were mistakes not just because they were lost; actually, they were lost because they were mistakes. They were mistakes because they used highly symbolic, even mystical, organizations for extremely practical purposes and that rarely works. It's like trying to herd sheep with a crozier.

A more sharply focused demonstration of the symbolic nature of Naval vessels took place during the war against Indochina in a kind of side show essentially unrelated to the main attraction but linked both mystically and through the conscious manipulation of the leading arms and intelligence mystagogue of the day, Dr. Kissinger. For purely mystical reasons Kissinger and his master, Nixon, had sent a full-fledged, rip-roaring, old-timey battleship to the waters off Indochina. That dispatch involved taking the battleship out of "mothballs," that is out of dead storage, where it had been for many years because considerations of rationality and efficacy taught Naval phlilosophers that the battleship would never again have the practical wartime importance it once did. So there it was steaming up and down the coast performing its mystical functions for naval and other military personnel in the area but especially for the hierarch and his mystagogue in the White House.

In the middle of this essay in nostalgia—quite possibly derived ultimately from Nixon's acknowledged passion for the television show, "Victory at Sea"—war broke out in the Indian subcontinent. The West Pakistanis fell upon the East Pakistanis, or the Bangladesh people in what was evidently an attempt to wipe them out, making all Pakistan the exclusive property of the West Paks. As the slaughter, looting and rape mounted, the neighboring Indians went to the assistance of Bangladesh, put an end to the attempted genocide and eventually helped establish an independent state in what had been the east part of Pakistan.

Pakistan, of course, was an ally of this country and widely regarded as more reliable, both militarily and ideologically, than India, which showed discomforting signs of wishing to decide for itself who its enemies are and what should be done about them. Anyway, in the midst of all this, the hierarch and his mystagogue, after issuing vague warnings and vowing to "tilt" in favor of genocide, dispatched the golden oldie from the Indochinese waters to those of India and Bangladesh, where it was directed again to cruise up and down, presumably in the belief that its mere presence would cause the Indians to retire and leave the Bangladesh people once more at the mercy of their attackers, the Pakistani. At a guess, the theory was that the battleship would emit rays of American puissance dismaying to the Indians. For our purposes here, however, it is clear that Nixon and Kissinger were dealing with purely mystical values having only a symbolic relationship to the actual conduct of war.

It will be recalled that later, when the mystagogue went to work for another, decidedly non-mystical President, Ford, he persuaded him into another celebration of naval mysticism in the ill-fated *Mayaguez* affair.

It is no accident that Kissinger's head acolyte, the unspeakable Haig, is the chief mystagogue of NATO and in that position is lobbying for more numerous and more puissant (and expensive) symbols with which to perform his ceremonies against all evil. Haig, it will be recalled, fearlessly took over the management of Nixon's defenses against the Republic when Kissinger prudently retired to the higher ground of statesmanlikeness. In performing those duties, Haig's high point in public was his pronouncement that the famed eighteen-and-a-half minute gap in the tape had been caused by "sinister forces." Since the principal duty of any NATO commander has to be the discernment of sinister forces and invoking against them the mystical powers of the United States Treasury, Haig was a natural for the job. His extremely limited and low level experience in the actual conduct of war—with guns and casualties and all that—was irrelevant. He was aces at seeing sinister forces and warning against them and that's what NATO and, for that matter, the rest of the American defense establishment, needs a lot more than it needs someone who actually knows how to command armies and navies.

Carter's fatal flaw, then, in dealing with the military is the effort to be rational and efficacious when he is basically confronted with a philosophical, even aesthetic, field of knowledge. Once the discussion is shifted onto its proper plane, it becomes quite clear that the admirals are right, the President wrong. A nuclear aircraft carrier is marvelous for the morale of gold-braided people and that's as close as the question comes to any remotely practical consideration of war. The great thing about the supercarrier is that it is great; this is the very same thing that is great about the great bomber, the B-1.

It is interesting that ground warfare at present has no equivalent at all of the mystical carrier for the Navy, the mystical bomber for the Air Force. The tank never really did it, although perhaps, for some—Patton comes to mind—it had a modicum of mysticism in World War II. In that war, too, some dedicated public-relations general tried to invest the humble M-1 rifle wtih mysticism, composing a kind of prayer to the rifle, but it never caught on. Basically, infantrymen don't go in for mysticism because they actually do the fighting.

FRANK GETLEIN

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ONE OF THE ELECTORS

ABIGAIL McCARTHY

It is over now, the hiatus between Popes, and the impressions fading, but there is one which lingers. . . .

"We are without a Pope," said the young priest to his university parish. *"Without a Pope"*—it was an unsettling phrase. We don't usually think of it that way. We are caught up in the story of the Pope just dead and speculation about the Pope to come. "Without a Pope"—suddenly the enthusiasm with which the Roman crowds respond to the age-old cry *habemus papam!* seems to echo in our own feelings.

In that time without a Pope one could envision the cardinals hurrying to Rome from the far-flung outposts of the church—from Upper Volta, from Argentina, from Santiago de Chile, from Winnipeg set in the prairies, from perilous and turbulent Zaire, from teeming Calcutta. Even with the technological marvels of modern transportation the journey for some of them is arduous.

In my mind's eye I could see Cardinal Fio Taofinu'u leaving Apia in Western Samoa on one of the twice-weekly flights to Pago-Pago to begin there the long flight across the Pacific, across Asia and the Middle East to Rome. I wondered how he and his concerns for his people would fare in the conclave, and with the new Pope.

The cardinal is one of those who are living signs that the church can no longer be thought of as European. He is the first Polynesian to be made cardinal, and, unlike many indigenous bishops who were products of the older missionary training, he has escaped total "transculturization." He remains very much a Samoan. His conversation with visitors has none of the nostalgic eagerness for news which marks the exile, the man who who has studied abroad and never quite come home again. (This is often very marked in American clerics who have studied in Rome.) He is rather a man taking every opportunity to make his people and their relation to the church understood. Visitors are potential messengers.

Meeting him for the first time has much of the quality of the intense face-to-face encounters of a small enclosed society which Margaret Mead comments on in her *Letters from the Field.* I first saw him at his office in a little building on a hillside above Apia. We had set out, my friends and I, in the heavy wet air and fog of a rainy morning in the tropics. The heights behind the little city are precipitous and, in that weather, the approach road seemed narrow, slippery, and dangerously steep—a far cry from the sweeping drives to other chanceries I have seen.

We found the cardinal a pleasant-appearing man of 55, large even among a people whose leaders are notable for their size, but trim and fit. He wore the suntans of the tropics and his manner was dignified, simple and unassuming. To anyone inured to the impersonality of manner, the preoccupied half-attention, and the standardized affability of other prelates—all part of the armor of office—his warmth and direct interest was startling and made him seem open, even vulnerable.

He served the hearty morning tea himself, although his secretary, a young priest from California, had joined us. To those who have read of the concept of *fa'a Samoa*, according to the Samoan way, the cardinal seems to have it in his bones. There are traces in his hospitality and his gift-giving. He was disturbed, for example, to have been invited to a party for us before he could give one himself, as tradition indicated, and he appeared at that party bearing two beautiful fans from the Tokelaus for each of us. But he does not share in the unrealistic insistence that the old ways of Samoa exist unchanged, an idea to which the leaders of newly independent Western Samoa give at least lip service.

Cardinal Pio Taofinu'u, for example, has endured criticism for founding an old people's home. That families do not take care of their old is contrary to the concept of *fa'a Samoa.* The fond belief is that all the old are welcomed and cherished in their extended families. "But when I go to the villages, old people come up and tell me different stories. As we become a money culture, some of the old ways are going," he said sadly. "The home has filled quickly, and the sisters are gaining vocations. Taking care of the old is a vocation our Samoan girls can understand." Even some of those who denounced the institution as a betrayal of their way are seeking admittance for relatives.

The cardinal is distressed, on the other hand, at Roman insensitivity to the dignity of Polynesians. It was felt almost an insult to the people of the other territories in his diocese (American Samoa and the Tokelau Islands) when the diocese was named Apia. He had asked that it be renamed for all three. Behind that request is the complicated system of equality and courtesy among the chiefly nobles of the islands, but also a churchman's concern for how his church is perceived. It should not have been hard for Rome to understand.

More difficult, perhaps completely opaque to the curial mind, is the cardinal's feeling that the appointed lay leaders in each Samoan village not be confused with, or equated with, the lay catechists on which Rome relies in other countries. The presiding lay couple in each parish, he seems

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DON'T LOOK NOW BUT...

MILTON LEITENBERG

The Soviet satellite accident and some lessons from it

There are at present about 900 U.S. and USSR space satellites orbiting the earth. Hundreds more have been sent aloft since the beginning of the space age in 1958 and have since disintegrated on reentry, were destroyed in space, or were in part recovered in the course of their functioning. Only a very small proportion of these satellites are devoted to civilian purposes. Perhaps 80-90 percent are military satellite systems which serve a dozen different military functions. Reconnaissance and surveillance and communications are only the most well known of these functions. France, Britain and China also have military satellite programs. While the world's attention has been focused on "civilian" space exploits, such as moonflights, it must be understood that these military satellite systems are both an essential part of the U.S.-USSR nuclear arms race and the reason that space programs came into existence.

Governments would prefer that this understanding did not penetrate into the general public perception of the role of space systems. This holds particularly for the two major systems that the U.S. and the USSR will be deploying in the coming years, for the U.S. the Space Shuttle, and for the USSR, its Space Stations. Political commentors have sometimes offered the opinion that it was a good thing that the U.S. and the USSR were spending billions in their space efforts that they might otherwise have spent for strategic nuclear weapons. (The U.S. and the USSR have by now *each* spent well over 75 billion dollars for their space programs). This is a very critical mistake. These military satellite programs serve as *direct* adjuncts to essential aspects of each side's nuclear weapon systems: target location, early warning of enemy missile launch, command and control of one's own weapon systems, and numerous other measurement and accuracy functions related to the performance of intercontinental nuclear missile systems. In the last few years there has been a burst of news about Soviet "hunter-killer" satellite destruction systems. The radar tracking networks to support these programs, and such satellite intercept and destruction programs have in reality existed since the early 1960's. There is every indication that military satellite systems will be increasingly in the news in the coming years, including U.S. and USSR satellite destruction programs.

The recent accident of a Soviet military satellite that happened to contain a small nuclear power reactor is only a small peripheral aspect of the subject of military space systems. It indicates the dangers to civilian populations posed by a small group of these satellites, but far more importantly, it drew into sharp focus several more essential aspects of the problem. These are government attitudes to these systems, their purpose, and the strong government disinterest in any extended public discussion and exposure of either details, purposes, or risks of military satellite programs.

In September 1977, the Soviet Union launched a satellite, Cosmos 954, to track U.S. naval vessels, particularly aircraft carriers. The satellite's instruments were powered by a nuclear reactor, fueled by uranium-235. In about mid-December, the craft began to lose altitude and on 24 January it re-entered the earth's atmosphere. While most of the satellite apparently burned up in the process of re-entry, at least some material survived to land in Canada's Northwest Territory. The debris ranged in radio-activity from entirely "clean" to highly dangerous.

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Until the satellite actually hit the ground, only a very few people were aware that Cosmos 954 was in trouble. Soviet scientists had attempted to detach the nuclear reactor from the satellite and send it into a very high orbit (about 650 miles). This is the procedure which the USSR routinely follows with its reactor-powered satellites when a malfunction occurs or when the satellite is no longer needed. On this occasion, the satellite failed to respond. There is a possibility that it was precisely the failure of this maneuver which caused Cosmos 954 to fall so rapidly out of orbit.[1]

By mid-December, the computers of the U.S. satellite tracking system deep inside Cheyenne Mountain in Colorado had realized that something was wrong with Cosmos 954. But at least a few people in the U.S. government apparently knew even earlier, possibly before December, that the Soviet spacecraft was not functioning properly. It has not been made clear how this earlier information was obtained, through a communications intercept from Soviet satellite control stations is a likely possibility.[2]

In mid-January it became clear that the satellite was going to re-enter the earth's atmosphere. At this point Washington contacted the Soviet government with questions concerning the amount and nature of the fuel aboard. One published account simply stated that the U.S. government requested details concerning the enrichment of the uranium on board.[3] A *Baltimore Sun* report also indicated that the U.S. knew that Cosmos 954 was carrying a nuclear reactor prior to discussions with Moscow.[4] The *New York Times* reported that the U.S. suspected that the satellite was using a "nuclear powerplant."[5]

The Soviet government was reluctant to provide too many details, but eventually the U.S. was given sufficient information to conclude that the satellite would not produce a nuclear explosion either upon re-entry or on impact with the earth. Unfortunately, it was impossible to determine the precise re-entry point of Cosmos 954. The United States government notified its NATO allies, Japan, Australia and New Zealand of the problem sometime around 12 January. It is not known if the USSR alerted any of its allies. The Italian government notified the Swiss.

The Canadian government reportedly was unaware that the satellite had landed on its territory until Prime Minister Trudeau was informed by President Carter early in the morning of 24 January. Soon after that, U.S. national security advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski held a press briefing to announce that a Soviet satellite had crashed into a relatively uninhabited region in northern Canada.

The chances were always better than even that Cosmos 954 would not land in a heavily populated area: two-thirds of the earth's surface is covered by water, and large portions of the land surface are sparsely populated. That should not, however, be any cause for complacency. One of the most radioactive pieces of the satellite yet recovered was found near Fort Reliance in the Northwest Territory of Canada. Fort Reliance lies on the northeastern shore of Great Slave Lake. Although this relatively large body of water covers over 10,000 square miles, 100 pounds of enriched uranium-235, the amount contained in the core of the Cosmos 954 reactor could cause considerable radioactive contamination to it. The entire area in which debris has thus far been located is a tundra riddled with bodies of water of varying sizes. The major food sources of the local populations, small though they may be, are the fish, fowl, caribou and small game that live on this terrain. In fact many of the sparsely populated areas of the world are composed of extremely delicate ecosystems and shouldn't be considered convenient dumping grounds for the waste of the space age because their population density may be low.

Official Disinformation

The Cosmos 954 incident has also served to underline an extremely important point concerning the relationship between people and their governments: any sort of accident involving nuclear materials routinely finds governments producing more disinformation for public consumption than does any other category of event. The Soviet Union is particularly sensitive to adverse publicity on issues concerning any aspect of technology, or on any incident which the Soviet government believes will call forth a negative domestic and/or international public response. While Western countries may have similar sensitivities, there is a complete lack of public accountability within the Soviet system which enables the Soviet government simply to ignore matters it would prefer not to discuss. In Western societies, particularly in the U.S., attempts may be made to play down the importance of particular events, but with time and effort interested individuals can usually uncover at least some of the suppressed details, or the information may be offered to the public by a disaffected official. This may not happen quickly or very easily, but the potential does exist for circumventing governmental information "blackouts." Such is simply not the case in the Soviet Union.

Throughout the Cosmos 954 incident the performance of the USSR ran true-to-form. It was not until at least a month after the U.S. first became aware of problems with Cosmos 954 that some information on the satellite was obtained from the USSR, and that would almost certainly not have been forthcoming without U.S. questioning. Had the U.S. not chosen to announce the crash, the Soviet Union would very likely have remained silent. As it was, the U.S. government

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had to ask Moscow several times for information on precise details concerning the enrichment of the uranium on Cosmos 954 and the likelihood of a critical mass being attained. After Brzezinski briefed the press on the satellite crash, the Soviet Union made no initial comment. It subsequently limited itself to stating that Cosmos 954 had dropped out of orbit over Canada and had "ceased to exist."

Although the U.S. and Canadian governments did make public more details, their primary concern was to restrict the discussion as much as possible and to provide the public with as little real information as possible. Official statements were often exceedingly careless and misleading, and from the Canadian government, almost whimsical.

At Brzezinski's initial press briefing on 24 January, he reportedly stated that no satellite carrying a nuclear reactor had ever before re-entered the earth's atmosphere.[6] However, in 1973, a Soviet satellite in the same family as Cosmos 954 did re-enter the earth's atmosphere and fell into the Pacific north of Japan.[7] The mission of satellites of the Cosmos 954 type is to track the movements of U.S. vessels, particularly aircraft carriers, for 24 hours a day even through cloud cover. The USSR has been particularly concerned about the location of these ships because they carry aircraft whose mission it is to deliver nuclear weapons on the USSR. U.S. authorities have always assumed that this entire class of Soviet naval reconnaissance satellite is powered by small nuclear reactors of the type that was carried by Cosmos 954.

Both solar energy and other radioactive materials, especially the relatively quickly decaying plutonium-238, have been used by the U.S. and the USSR to provide power for space satellites. However, solar energy is not suitable for 24-hour surveillance, (as a satellite will be in the dark for long periods each day) and the power levels it can generate are not sufficient for a radar satellite. To provide sufficient strength to run the radar aboard Cosmos 954-type craft, a more powerful energy source than plutonium-238 is necessary. Thus, if a satellite in the Cosmos 954 family reentered the atmosphere in 1973, it too must have been carrying a nuclear reactor.

Furthermore, neither Brzezinski nor any other U.S. official has felt it necessary to point out that at least five other space objects carrying some kind of radioactive materials have re-entered the earth's atmosphere since 1964. While the U.S. has experimented with nuclear reactors in space and has launched at least one reactor-bearing satellite, it has found plutonium-238 particularly useful as a power source in space where solar energy cannot be employed. As the plutonium decays, it releases heat which can be turned into electricity. U.S. "power packages" of this nature were formerly referred to as SNAP packages, and are now called Radiosotope Thermoelectric Generators (RTGs). They are not nuclear reactors, although they do contain radioactive materials.

Three U.S. incidents involving plutonium-238 space power packages have occurred, in 1964, 1968 and 1970. Only in the 1968 incident was the plutonium power source recovered intact. In the 1964 case, a U.S. Navy navigation satellite failed to enter its orbit and the satellite burned upon re-entry into the atmosphere over Madagascar. In 1970, when the Apollo 13 moon mission was aborted, the lunar landing module was jettisoned. It contained an RTG which was to have been left on the moon to power scientific instuments placed there by the Apollo 13 crew. The landing module re-entered the atmosphere and whatever remained of it fell into the southwest Pacific.[8]

The other two known nuclear space accidents have involved Soviet space vehicles. In 1969 two Soviet mooncraft carrying unspecified radioactive materials as a heat source for their capsules re-entered the earth's atmosphere. Both burned up and subsequently some high-altitude radioactivity was discovered.[9]

U.S. officials have made much of the fact that the U.S. has only one similar, i.e. nuclear reactor, satellite in orbit.[10] What they frequently neglect to add is that there are at least 24 and perhaps as many as 32 U.S. and Soviet satellites in earth orbits which contain some sort of radioactive substance.[11] Furthermore, there are five U.S. nuclear-powered energy sources on the moon and two on Mars. Others are found in spacecraft designed for planetary exploration: Pioneers 10 and 11 (launched 1972 and 1973 toward Jupiter), and two Voyagers (both launched 1977 toward Jupiter, Saturn and beyond).[12] These power sources designed for moon and planetary probes contain much larger amounts of plutonium-238 than do earth orbiting satellites, for their energy requirements are larger and for longer duration.

When these other kinds of nuclear-powered "packages" are discussed, U.S. officials are quick to point out the difference between them and the uranium-235 reactor used in Cosmos 954. The half-life (time required for half the material to decay) of uranium-235 is 713 million years; of plutonium-238 about 88 years. The amount of plutonium-238 required to fuel earth-orbiting RTGs is much less than the amount of uranium-235 in a Cosmos 954-type satellite. Thus, even if an accident were to occur, there would be less lethal material to be spread around. (Of course, if an accident occurred to one of the satellites designed for moon or planetary probes, such as the lunar module jettisoned by the aborted Apollo 13 mission, the amount of plutonium-238 would be greater than for accidents involving earth-orbiting RTGs.) The more rapid rate of decay would make a difference in several hundred years time, when most of the plutonium-238 had

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been given time to decay. But if an accident were to occur relatively soon after a satellite containing an RTG left the earth's atmosphere, as happened with Cosmos 954, highly poisonous material could be released.

U.S. space experts have claimed that U.S. nuclear-powered-satellites are designed to withstand all but the "most severe accident" without emitting radiation.[13] This appearently includes re-entry from space. The RTG is encased in a container made of heavy metal and protected by a heat shield.[14] However, because a power source has been designed to withstand all but the greatest stress, there is no guarantee that it will actually do so, and there is no reason not to worry that the "most severe accident" might occur.

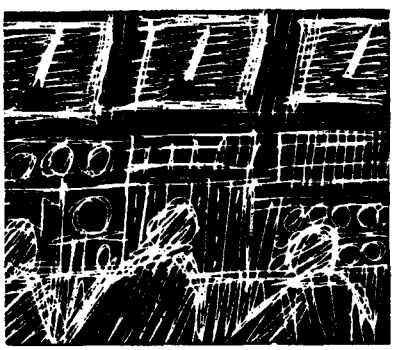
Finally, when the U.S. does talk about its uranium-235 powered satellite, the SNAP-10A, it is pointed out that while the USSR "parks" its uranium-powered satellites in an orbit from which they will fall back into the atmosphere naturally within 1000 years, the SNAP-10A will not re-enter the atmosphere for at least 4000 years. However, as far as uranium-235 is concerned, 3000 years makes little difference. Some journalistic accounts of the Cosmos 954 affair have pointed this out. Nonetheless, at least one Associated Press report from Washington, D.C. incorrectly stated that, after 4000 years, "the uranium-235 fuel will have burned itself out and be no threat as the payload re-enters the earth's atmosphere and burns up."[15]

When Brzezinski first announced the Cosmos crash, he stated that scientific experience indicated that "it was very highly probable that it [Cosmos 954] would burn up." In addition, he claimed that "The chances are very little that any contamination resulted."[16] Similar statements were made by Canadian officials. The USSR claimed that the Cosmos 954 satellite had been "designed" to burn up entirely upon re-entry. The Soviet statement, it should be pointed out, probably meant no more than that the reactor in the satellite did not contain a heat shield and was thus not specially protected against the heat produced by re-entry from space.

Then, just 36 hours after the satellite had crashed, a very heavy concentration of radiation was detected about 200 miles west of Baker Lake. The Canadian Minister of National Defense stated that there was "a 90 percent chance" that this radiation was being produced by satellite debris.[17] Two days later, the radiation reading was reported to be the result either of malfunctioning equipment or natural uranium outcroppings. The Chief of the Canadian defense staff stated that "It is unlikely that there is anything on the ground" from Cosmos 954.[18] All of these statements were incompetent and irresponsible. What should have been said was that no one would know until an extensive search had been completed.

By 30 January, six days after the satellite crashed, the first positive identifications of debris were made: 250 miles southwest of Baker Lake, on the ice of Great Slave Lake some 16 miles northwest of Fort Reliance, and four miles west of Fort Reliance.[19] Within a week, dozens of debris sites had been located. Many of the pieces recovered were radioactive to varying degrees. As one Canadian official at the search headquarters acknowledged, the area where debris can be expected to be found is about the size of Switzerland. The core of the reactor, the most dangerous part of the entire satellite, "could be buried in ice or tundra and shielded by the terrain."[20]

In short, no one yet knows how much radioactive material survived the accident and where it is located. Nevertheless, officials involved with the incident have not stopped making premature assessments. Press reports have characterized the area into which the satellite fell as "sparsely populated," "one of the least inhabited areas of the world." However, one of the major debris sites is about 250 miles from an Eskimo settlement of 1000 people at Baker Lake. The area in which



other debris has been found is an important fishing area and hunting ground for natives of the Northwest Territory. The Baker Lake Eskimos are highly dependent upon caribou meat and fish and have been understandably worried that their main sources of food may now be contaminated.

Canadian officials have reportedly assured them that even if radioactive pieces of the satellite fell into water sources, the radiation "would be diluted to harmless levels."[21] The truth of such a statement could not possibly be assessed for some time to come. Whether or not the water is seriously contaminated depends on the amount of radioactive material that has fallen into it. The safety of water sources can only be determined after each is checked individually for contamination.

Statements of this nature are, however, completely consistent with the way the entire affair has been handled by the governments concerned. The USSR would most likely have said nothing unless pressed by the U.S., and in any case, would have said nothing publicly. The U.S. knew of the problem for at least a month and possibly for as long as seven weeks before it informed its allies. Until the satellite actually hit the ground, secrecy was

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maintained by all the governments which knew it was coming.

Officially, it was stated that secrecy was maintained because governments feared "panic" if it were announced that a nuclear-powered satellite was out of control and would enter the atmosphere at some unknown spot. The West German government was reported to be particularly concerned with preventing undesirable public reaction. As far as the U.S. government was concerned, fears of widespread panic were probably secondary to fears of public protests against *all* satellites carrying nuclear materials which might have been expected to arise from any such advance warning. The question might obviously have developed: what right do two nations, the U.S. and the USSR, have to send nuclear materials into space which might re-enter and fall on *any* other nation's territory. When Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau was asked why he had chosen not to alert the Canadian public, he replied "It could have [disintegrated] in the Southern Hemisphere." The U.S. seems to have warned only two countries in that hemisphere, Australia and New Zealand. Other countries were not trusted to withhold such "delicate information."[22] The U.S. offered to send special radioactive material clean-up teams to any nation that should care to request them. It had, of course, used such special teams in the case of U.S. overseas nuclear weapons accidents, in Spain in 1966 and in Thule, Greenland, in 1968. The offer seems considerate enough, especially as in this case the satellite carrying the nuclear reactor which was expected to land somewhere on earth was a Soviet one. However, it is best understood as a part of the effort to forestall any development of international pressure against military satellite programs in general, and in particular, against sending satellites into space in the first place that carried radioactive power packages.

A week after the crash of Cosmos 954, President Carter called for a total ban on "earth-orbiting satellites with atomic radiation material in them" if no "fail-safe" methods could be developed to keep radioactive materials from re-entering the earth's atmosphere or landing on the earth. Stating that he would make a request to the USSR that it orbit no more reactor-carrying satellites, Carter added that the U.S. "would be glad to forego the deployment of any such satellites altogether."[23] Unfortunately, this proposal seems to parallel numerous "arms control" proposals offered by the U.S. and the USSR since the end of World War II, in which the proposing country suggests that the other side give up something of importance to it while the proposer gives up exactly nothing.

Despite the public call for a "total ban on earth-orbiting satellites with atomic radiation material in them," Carter's proposal reportedly did not include anything but uranium-235 powered nuclear reactor satellites in earth-orbits. The RTGs, non-uranium radioisotopic power sources, would still be allowed in earth orbits. Nor would the use of uranium-235 or any other radioactive materials in outer space be prohibited.[24] Such satellites or space probes must still undergo launch from the earth, in the process of which they are vulnerable to accident. Although the Fiscal Year 1979 budget request from the Department of Energy includes a proposal for research into nuclear reactors in space, there are no existing or relatively near future satellite programs which would be put at stake on the American side by a reactor ban.[25] The Soviet Union, however, relies entirely on this power source to run the network of naval tracking satellites that its policy-makers must consider important to USSR security. It seems unlikely, therefore, that any U.S. proposal to limit nuclear reactor-bearing satellites in earth orbit would be accepted by the USSR. In any case, no such proposal has been formally made by the U.S. government as of yet.

Of course, no one on the U.S. side (or in the USSR) has said anything about the U.S. aircraft carriers and their nuclear strike forces, the essential context in which the Soviet naval reconnaissance satellites were developed and deployed over the past ten years. Cosmos 954 and its nuclear reactor were not recent innovations. Similar ones have been in orbit for ten years now. However, that would be getting into issues of U.S. and USSR strategic weapon programs that are far more important to both the U.S. and the USSR than the radioactivity-safety considerations of a single satellite accident. Such considerations would certainly *not* be traded to resolve any safety factors. A discussion of such factors, however, would make it publicly obvious that military satellite programs would not be changed on behalf of safety considerations, and in fact that the rate of U.S. and Soviet deployment of these systems has been accelerating in the past few years, and will continue to accelerate.

After the accident a group of nations, including Canada, Japan, Sweden and Italy, suggested some restrictions on nuclear materials in space. This proposal was made in the U.N. Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.[26] It was very quickly rejected by the USSR on 14 February. The only U.S. proposal before this Committee, which is expected to be the focus of international debate on the topic, does not mention banning any form of radioactive material from space. Rather, it concentrates on safety standards, notice of launching and re-entry, provision of search and clean-up assistance by the satellite owner.[27] This might be consistent with Carter's original statement in which he said that, short of "fail-safe methods" for preventing reactor accidents, he favored a total ban on radioactive substances in earth-orbits. Alternatively, it could indicate disagreement within the U.S. government as to the best course to follow. According to U.N. agreements

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signed by both the U.S. and the USSR long ago, all satellite launches, military as well as civilian, are supposed to be registered with the U.N. and their purpose clearly identified. The USSR has never identified the purpose of any of its satellites, and the U.S., after doing so for a year or two and seeing that the USSR did not, stopped doing so. The USSR announces all its military satellites as carrying out "scientific research."

On March 18, 1978 the U.S. requested the Soviet Union to begin negotiations with it within a month, on banning hunter killer satellites in space, despite the strong reservations of the U.S. Department of Defense.[28] However, the negotiations actually didn't begin until June 8.[29] When they did, and in the several intervening months of policy discussions on the question in Washington, a situation developed which was quite typical of past arms control efforts in other areas over the years.[30] The Department of Defense was decidedly unhappy about the presidential initiative, and opposed entering into any agreement that would *ban testing* of hunter killer satellites or mechanisms. Such a ban had been advocated as a negotiating position by arms control advocates within the administration since 1977. Opposition by the DOD, and by other governmental branches, won out, and the U.S. will not propose banning anti-satellite tests in the negotiations.

One thing, however, is clear. Neither the earlier so-called "total ban" suggestion as it apparently presently stands, nor any agreement on "fail-safe" procedures, will limit the number of satellites in space carrying some form of nuclear material. As satellite programs increase, and with satellite lifetimes reckoned in the hundreds and thousands of years, the outcome is only too likely to be a growing danger of more frequent and serious Cosmos 954-type incidents. But again, still more important than this particular aspect is the fact that the last few years have seen an acceleration in U.S. and USSR military satellite systems. That same increase in activity has in turn bred an increased concern and anxiety in both nations for "space warfare" in the future, as they both put more and more of their supporting systems for strategic nuclear warfare into satellites in space. That leads to anti-satellite destruction systems, defensive systems and so on. We are well into an arms race in space, and there is every indication that its tempo and animosity will increase in the coming years.

NOTES:

[1] Laurence Marks and Andrew Wilson, "One of Our Sputniks is Missing", *The Observer* (U.K.), 29 January 1978: Richard D. Lyons, "Soviet Spy Satellite With Atomic Reactor Breaks Up in Canada", *New York Times*, 25 January 1978. Lyons stated that the role played by the attempt to send the satellite up to 650 miles could not be confirmed. Marks and Wilson identify this failure as the cause of Cosmos 954's rapid return to earth.

[2] Charles W. Corddry, "Air Force Predicted Crash of Soviet Craft", *Baltimore Sun*, 25 January 1978, writes that the warning from the Cheyenne Mountain tracking station "came as no surprise here, for Washington had known from other sources that the Soviet Union was having trouble with the sea surveillance spacecraft." A CBS Radio newscast of 25 January 1978 reported that the U.S. informed its allies some seven weeks after it first became aware of the problem with Cosmos. This would mean that the information was received in Washington no later than 1 December and possibly earlier.

[3] "Cosmos 954: An Ugly Death", *Time Magazine*, 6 February 1978, p. 28.

[4] Corddry, *op. cit.*

[5] "Plunge From Orbit", *New York Times*, 29 January 1978.

[6] "Soviet Nuclear Satellite Breaks Up", *Ithaca Journal*, 24 January 1978.

[7] "Cosmos 954: An Ugly Death", *op. cit.*, p. 29.

[8] Walter Sullivan, "U.S. Space Mishaps in '64 and '70 Noted", *New York Times*, 25 January 1978; "Lost: Somewhere in Space, Two Pounds of Plutonium 238", *Nuclear Information* (May 1964), pp. 12, 13; "Cosmos 954: An Ugly Death", *op. cit.*, p. 29.

[9] "Cosmos 954: An Ugly Death", *op. cit.*, p. 29.

[10] Information on SNAP-10A, the U.S. nuclear reactor-powered satellite launched in 1965, can be found in U.S. Congress, Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, Hearings: *Space Nuclear Power Generators*, 89th Cong., 1st Sess., Washington, D.C.: U.S. Govt. Printing Office, 1966, especially "Appendix 2: Information Supplied by AEC Concerning Flight Test of SNAP-10A", pp. 130-230.

[11] Most newspaper accounts credit the U.S. with nine nuclear-powered satellites in orbit and the Soviet Union with fifteen Cosmos 954-type satellites. (Cosmos 954 was the sixteenth in that series.) "Hard Rain From Space", *Boston Globe*, 28 January 1978, stated that "There are about 32 satellites in earth orbit that are powered by nuclear fuel."

[12] Victor K. McElheny, "Technology: Plutonium Power for Space Exploration", *New York Times*, 31 August 1977, p. 45.

[13] "U.S. Urges Tough Rules to Bar Satellite Accidents", *Baltimore Sun*, 16 February 1978, p. 2.

[14] McElheny, *op. cit.*

[15] "U.S. Using One Nuclear Satellite", *Ithaca Journal*, 25 January 1978, p. 2.

[16] "Russian Nuclear-Powered Spy Satellite Falls Over Canada", *The Seattle Times*, 24 January 1978, p. 1.

[17] Robert Trumbull, "Powerful Radiation Detected in Canada", *New York Times*, 27 January 1978.

[18] "Radioactivity Not From the Satellite", *Ithaca Journal*, 28 January 1978. See also, Robert Trumbull, "Satellite Radiation New Held Unlikely", *New York Times*, 28 January 1978.

[19] Robert Trumbull, "Radioactive Fragment is Identified as Part of Satellite", *New York Times*, 31 January 1978, p. 11.

[20] "More Satellite Debris Found", *Ithaca Journal*, 7 February 1978.

[21] "Eskimos Reassured on Satellite Radiation", *New York Times*, 30 January 1978.

[22] Marks and Wilson, *op. cit.*

[23] "Carter to Rush N-Satellite Halt", *Syracuse Post-Standard*, 31 January 1978, p. 1.

[24] "Cosmos Debris Examined in Canada", *Aviation Week & Space Technology*, 6 February 1978, pp. 22-23; Richard D. Lyons, "Carter Favors Ban on Atomic Reactors in Earth Satellites", *New York Times*, 31 January 1978, p. 1.

[25] "Cosmos Debris Examined in Canada", *op. cit.*, p. 23.

[26] "U.S. Urges Tough Rules to Bar Satellite Accidents", *op. cit.*

[27] *Ibid.*

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INTO THE ROUNDHOUSE AND OVER THE STYX TO GRANDMOTHER'S GRAVE WE GO

DAVID K. O'ROURKE

No one who has buried the dead for a dozen years has any right to be surprised by the bizarre. The prospect of death brings on an inventiveness that would do credit to the Marx Brothers. But for all that it still comes as a shock when old Holy Sepulcher becomes as freaky as new Whispering Glades.

As family member, religious and priest I have made many a trip to the cemetery in the past forty years. And despite the emotional difficulty inherent in burying the dead I have often experienced a sense of completion in seeing the coffin set in its final place. But a new practice that threatens to become common in Catholic cemeteries could go far to place our burial practices alongside the wackiest of Southern California excesses.

A few years ago I went to a Catholic cemetery for a burial following the funeral Mass. The new ritual for burials, drawn up in the course of renewing the liturgy, provides a large selection of quite decent prayers, and with thought and planning it is possible to present a burial service that is genuinely religious and emotionally helpful to the people present. I had prepared what I thought would be an appropriate graveside service.

To my surprise we were ushered into a new building, shaped somewhat like an old, locomotive roundhouse, divided into a series of "chapels." Ours was called Resurrection Chapel and, as Winston Churchill said, "If that depicts the bliss of the resurrection, then I can face an eternal sleep with equanimity." We were brought in to a group of folding chairs surrounding a brown, metal wagon apparently capable of being raised and lowered hydraulically. A man came in carrying a clipboard. Naively I asked him, "Aren't we going to the grave?" "Oh," he said, "we don't do that anymore." I admit that I began wondering just what they did do, and the first image that came to mind was the Mike Nichols and Elaine May $15.00 funeral—"Two men come in a green pick-up, and God knows what they do."

But by now the coffin was on the wagon, and I had to figure out then and there how you commit a body to a hydraulic lift. Decidedly rattled I adapted the prayers to the new context, at least to the extent that you can adapt a burial to a freight station, and concluded the service. Or I thought I had concluded it. At the end the man with the clipboard came over, scotch-taped a numbered message on the foot of the coffin, and guided the wagon over to low, oven-shaped doors set into the inside wall of the roundhouse. The doors opened, the wagon-with-coffin disappeared inside, and the doors closed. The man with the clipboard smiled at us and left.

With something less than consummate, pastoral skill I went to one of the family members and asked him, "What do we do now?" "I don't know about you," he replied, "but I want to see what's behind those doors." We looked until we found a door designed for human passage—peeking through the oven doors seemed inappropriate—and opened it, startling a group of grave diggers on their coffee break. We were looking into the round room at the center of the roundhouse. In it were a collection of garden tools, several wilted wreaths and, arranged like the spokes of a wheel, a half dozen wagons each with its coffin on it. "Well," he said, "now we know."

Our curiosity was satisfied, but our rather deep-seated and Catholic desire to see a friend and relative laid to rest was not. Riding home with the family in the weary silence that often follows upon death and funeral my mind began recomposing the graveside prayers. One of the prayers I frequently use runs:

> Lord Jesus Christ, by the three days you lay in the tomb you made holy the graves of all who believe in you; and even though their bodies lie in the earth they trust that they, like you, will rise again. Give our brother peaceful rest in this grave until that day when you, the resurrection and the life, will raise him up in glory. Then may he see the light of your presence, Lord Jesus, in the kingdom where you live for ever.

Somehow, reciting this prayer in a funerary roundhouse, over a hydraulic wagon, prior to committing the body into the hands of a man with a clipboard seems inappropriate. Alternatives might run in the following manner.

> Lord God, as you watched over and guarded the bodies of the patriarchs until they could be brought to rest in the land you had promised, so we ask you to watch over the body of our brother as it enters upon its own unknown voyage from here to its grave. May your holy angels keep the

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label with name and plot numbered from falling off; may the martyrs keep the gravediggers alert and bring them to the right grave; and may all the saints guard this body until it should be laid to rest and buried.

To some, perhaps this attitude may seem flippant and somehow to be making a mountain out of a molehill. Flippant it may be, but it is occasioned by a practice whose roots are as unworthy as its effects are harmful. And, let there be no mistake, the effects are indeed harmful. On more than one occasion I have led mourners away who were distraught at the need to leave their dead unburied. And the distress endures. One of my friends, a priest who was working on the staff of the crisis clinic maintained by the psychiatric department of a major hospital, was approached by one of the clinic's psychiatrists. "What have you Catholics done to your funeral practices? It used to be a commonplace around here that Catholics never came in with problems about their dead being unburied. But for the last six months we've had a stream of Catholics who haven't finished up with burying their dead." Checking back we discovered that it was at that same time that the roundhouse was opened. The need to cope with the finality of death, to give a sense of completion to the process of burying the dead, a process that historically has been well assisted by our Catholic funeral rites which do not hide from the reality of death, was being undermined by this new system which interrupts the burial process prior to its completion and leaves the emotions of the survivors in a state of limbo. This can, and does, prove especially distressing to those of our Catholics whose cultures demand that the bodies of parents, spouses, etc. be watched-over until they are placed in their graves or tombs, and see the degree of compliance with these demands as an indicator of the survivors' respect for the deceased.

The origins of this new practice are not to be found in any liturgical or pastoral directives—that bad we've never become—but more in labor-management disputes between cemetery workers and the cemetery administrators. (Mourners who leave a body in the roundhouse need never feel the effects of a gravediggers' strike.) As a pastor I am sympathetic to the stresses any administrator must cope with. But as one who also, and vividly, remembers Cardinal Spellman sending the seminarians out to dig graves in order to break the gravediggers' strike I dislike seeing pastoral considerations sacrificed in favor of labor-management maneuverings.

Not too long ago I returned to the cemetery first mentioned above, bringing the ashes of a non-religious man who had requested and received permission to have them interred in his Catholic in-laws' family plot. He was a prominent scientist, a good man, and a real philanthropist. Again we were in Resurrection Chapel—same wagon, same man, same clipboard. The little bronze box looked lost on the hydraulic wagon so we packed it through the oven doors and placed the box on a small stand. At the end of the service a sister-in-law, still quite feisty despite her eighty years, asked "Well, when do we go to the grave?" Again, the same answer, "Oh, we don't do that anymore." "Oh yeah? I don't leave here until I see my brother-in-law's ashes put in the ground." And, warming to the battle, added, "And the grass put back on top!" "But we can't do that." "YOU can't do it," she shouted, "but I can, and I'm gonna!" Within what seemed like a matter of seconds we were walking, single file, up the grassy hillside to the near-by grave—relatives, bronze box, clipboard, shovels over pin-striped shoulders, startled gravediggers running to catch up. Before long the dead man's colleagues were helping with the burial, highly polished cordovans shoving the spades into the soft soil. Soon it was over. The sod was patted back into place. And it was completed. The man's colleagues were smiling. And the sister-in-law said, "Good, we've finished. Now we can go home."

Good timing has not always been one of the American church's stronger suits, but the bad timing in this new practice is really extraordinary. Elizabeth Kübler-Ross's writings on the processes of dying and grieving have proven remarkably popular. Our attitudes toward death are becoming more realistic and emotionally more healthy. We are better prepared to bring the body of a dead friend or relative to be buried without denying the reality of death, a reality our Catholic liturgy has always faced, and faced well. So what happens? Resurrection Chapels and hydraulic wagons become substituted for Christian burial. This is one advance we could really do without.

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ROY SCHEELE

WILD PEAR

The pear tree petals are like wax
at the lip of a candle's rim,
a clear film or lacquer of light;
like the edge of the waning moon
where it drops off sheer as water
to a dim ledge, till the outline
there of the far-down, faded moon
floats up in lost glints like the face
of a coin that you breathed upon;
or like the tall stone shouldered back
to let the light look in that day
at crack of dawn: the body gone,
the graveclothes empty as a sack . . .
The ground beneath the tree is soaked with dew.

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BLOWING THE WHISTLE

PETER KOVLER

Can conscientious federal employees be protected?

Condemnation of public servants for their beliefs or expressions has the inevitable result of substituting pallid orthodoxy for the independence of thought, ingenuity and boldness of decision which effective public service demands.

—Justice William O. Douglas

In 1951 U.S. Senator Richard Nixon introduced a bill that was designed to protect whistleblowers, federal employees who disclose government waste or corruption. The bill said that it should be a "violation of law for any officer of the federal government to dismiss or otherwise discipline a government employee for testifying before a committee of Congress." Naturally, the motive behind young Nixon's legislation was to encourage federal employees to expose fellow workers as Communist sympathizers.

In 1978—although the motives of the Congressmen are different—there are a half dozen whistleblower bills, including one passed in the Senate last month as part of a Civil Service Reform Bill. All of the bills have language similar to Nixon's. They are all attempts 1) to permit federal workers to speak out openly if they see abuses and 2) to prevent the whistleblowers' superiors from harassing or punishing them.

Indeed, these measures are part of an entire movement that is aimed at the liberation of this country's 2.8 million federal employees: National Conferences are being held, organizations such as the American Association for the Advancement of Science are offering symposia, some whistleblowers are trying to organize themselves, federal unions are examining the situation, Ralph Nader's Congress Watch has proposed new procedures to help them, congressional hearings have been held and the Carter administration is pushing its recommendations for "reform" of the Civil Service System, the head of the CSC declaring that the White House regards this situation with the same urgency as the Panama Canal Treaty and the energy bill.

On the surface it would seem like a reform whose time has come. In addition to all of the aforementioned "outsiders" who are urging reform, there seems to be a change in mood among the bureaucrats themselves. That is, close observers will tell you there is a great deal of unhappiness in federal agencies, largely because of a widespread sense of betrayal: The bureaucrats see how politicized agencies have become under Carter—even though candidate Carter promised a meritocracy.

At any rate, while a great stir and brouhaha can be expected, there is little chance that the status of honest federal employees will be dramatically changed. It appears that the higher authorities—the management in the agencies—will be able to resist the new movement —either by pressing legislators to reject progressive bills or, if legislation is passed, to obstruct implementation. In all likelihood, it seems that those who have already blown the whistle will become more celebrated and will be made heroes; but that those who continue to toil in the bureaucracies will be stifled. In short, the warble of the whistleblowers will continue to fall on deaf ears. The federal employee who witnesses governmental abuse is faced with an agonizing decision. His idealism makes him believe in the Code of Ethics for Government Service which directs him to place "loyalty to the highest moral principles and to country above loyalty to persons, party, or Government Department." But his experience and sense of realism tell him that superiors in the agency want "team play." At the moment, as a recent Congressional report stated, "the sincere whistleblowers' experience is colored by confusion, hypocrisy and uncertainty. A federal employee, motivated by a personal or professional Code of Ethics attempts to corcorrect a problem at the risk of career, financial security and reputation."

Nevertheless, some have spoken out and in recent years whistleblowers have publicly revealed defense cost overruns, unsafe nuclear power plants, questionable drugs that have been approved by the Federal Drug Administration, federal-private contract illegalities, conflicts of interest, merit system violations and regulatory indifference. Undoubtedly, if a federal worker had not been bold enough to expose such abuses, the public would still be unaware.

But instead of being rewarded for their efforts, whistleblowers are harassed out of their jobs. According to a report on whistleblowers that was issued by Ver-

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mont Senator Patrick Leahy, "the specific harassment has taken many forms. These include, among others, detail transfer, staff changes, lack of recognition for ideas, physical isolation and refusal to assign substantive work." Whistleblowers are seen as having publicly humiliated their agency; so, irrespective of an individual's merit or performance, he is "removed." Although there are many legal procedures by which he is supposed to be able to redress his grievances, none of them works.

Perhaps the best example of what happens to one is Ernie Fitzgerald, a Defense Department cost analyst. Even candidate Carter cited Fitzgerald in 1976 as a "case where a dedicated civil servant was fired . . . and which must never be repeated." In November of 1969 Fitzgerald told a Senate Subcommittee that there was a $2 billion cost overrun with the Lockheed C5-A cargo plane. He returned to his office as a public figure but found that he was received as a private enemy. He was not praised for saving the taxpayers' money. Rather, he was asked not to come to business meetings and social gatherings. His job was changed from monitoring major procurement programs to overseeing food service costs in mess halls and to the construction of a bowling alley in Thailand. Then, twelve days after delivering his testimony, his career tenure was revoked.

Later, the Pentagon's Office of Special Investigations probed his background and, as one result, he was increasingly isolated from his fellow-workers. In late 1969 he was removed from his job in an unprecedented one-man Reduction in Force. Eventually, however, he sued and was able to get back his job at the Air Force, even though he is, at present, forced to do trivial work.

In addition, Fitzgerald is now $400,000 in debt because of legal bills, and he has had to sue the Civil Service Commission for failing to enforce its 1973 decision to restore him to a job with equal responsibility. It has now been nine years since a superb public servant has been allowed to do his work.

Similar "rewards" have come to nuclear scientists Demetrios Basdekos and Angelo Morinos. After telling the Congress in December of 1976 about shoddy enforcement of regulations by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, they were assigned to menial tasks outside their areas of expertise. Too, there was Dr. Anthony Morris, formerly of the National Institute of Health and the Federal Drug Administration. When the swine flu immunization program was announced, Morris led a vocal campaign to stop it. In July of 1976 he was fired by the FDA for "insubordination and inefficiency." Said the agency: "The kind of behavior exhibited by you towards your scientific colleagues and administrative superiors directly challenges the integrity of scientific progress and the ability of the FDA to carry out its mission."

More recently in the Carter administration, Phil Vargas—an investigator for the Federal Paperwork Commission—was fired for writing about how the Executive branch hides and manipulates information. Ironically, Vargas's report emphasized the plight of the whistleblowers, about how the bureaucracy works to destroy them. As a columnist for *Federal Times*,, Inderjit Badhwar, phrased it: "It was as if one of the characters from his study had jumped out of it and assumed the name of Phil Vargas."

A Fair Hearing

The essential question is how to insure that the honest federal employee can get a fair hearing. At present, if a federal bureaucrat wants to improve the quality of public service by revealing wrongdoing, the issue will almost certainly change from the substance of his arguments to his own behavior and conduct. Often, the situation becomes a personal problem to be resolved by Civil Service Commission procedures. But the CSC, largely due to its dual role as overseer of a smooth bureaucratic process as well as its role to protect employees, is ineffective. As the Leahy report expressed it, "The extensive nature of the (CSC's) appeals process itself poses a serious problem. The number of required hearings provides many chances for delay as the employees moves up through the system. The process can span several years and is exacerbated by the fact that the original action remains in effect until the grievance is resolved. Under the present system, the human cost as appalling, for the appellant whistleblower faces the crisis of both financial and emotional survival."

As a consequence, most current reform proposals are aimed at improving personnel procedures so that it will be easier for the whistleblower to speak openly. In fact, everybody who is "concerned" with the problem uses the same rhetorical line: "No more Ernie Fitzgeralds." But a careful look at the new proposals indicates that it is likely that there will be many more Fitzgeralds.

The Carter administration's legislative package is perhaps the most dangerous for, to a large extent, it is masquerading as reform. Even the normally astute *New York Times* recently ran an article where it stated that "President Carter will soon make good on a campaign promise to protect federal employees who blow the whistle. . . ." Basically, the administration proposes to "make the bureaucracy more responsive" by giving greater power to managers. Says Civil Service Commission Chairman Alan Campbell: "To supply management with the kinds of tools that make it easier for management to manage."

Under the Carter legislation, for example, employees (including whistleblowers) will no longer have the right to appeal to the CSC when they are given a Reduc-

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tion In Rank order. This ability to appeal had been crucial for it was a way that whistleblowers had a chance to redress their problems. That is, managers have traditionally used a variety of informal types of harassment (making a whistleblower travel in order to disrupt his family life or by "layering" so that there is another rank installed above the whistleblower). All of these actions could be appealed on a Reduction In Rank accusation. Obviously, if this legislation is turned into law, the whistleblower's chances are diminished.

A second problem with Carter's proposal is the establishment of a Merit Protection Board, designed, it is said, to protect whistleblowers. However, the Board would not be able to take action against managers who are political appointees and, so, the Board's power would be greatly hampered.

One progressive measure has been promulgated by Senator Leahy and Congressman Udall. (S2232). It calls for a Review Board on Improper Government Action which would investigate employee complaints. Then, the Review Board could forward the information to the Justice Department and the General Accounting Office whence those agencies could investigate more thoroughly. Also, the Leahy-Udall bill would under certain circumstances entitle the whistleblower to "seek judicial review . . . (and) the reviewing court may provide for the awarding of reasonable attorney fees."

The Review Board could help or hinder an employee, simply by being a new forum. Since the Board's members are all to be presidential appointments, one wonders if—like other regulatory agencies—it would not tend to respond to the "establishment" agency chiefs. A second possible flaw is in the provision that the Board's findings should be passed to the Justice Department or the GAO. As most close observers see it, a lowly federal employee will find little sympathy from those "investigative" agencies. The provision, however, to allow an employee sometimes to bypass administrative procedures and go directly to District Court —and expect to be reimbursed—is a step that would immediately aid the whistleblower: Heretofore, expenses in prosecuting a case have been enormous. Unfortunately, however, this idea may be too liberal for the Congress and it may be killed before it can become law.

Ralph Nader's public citizen lobby has urged the establishment of an internal "prosecutor for the government" who would watch over the merit system and handle complaints against the federal system. Under the plan, whistleblowers would be offered many protections. Most importantly, this prosecutor would have to accept accusations, including anonymous tips, of alleged official harassment. Also, those whistleblowers who decided to reveal their names to the new office would not be named by the Counsel.

The most distinct part of the Nader plan is in the scope of the powers of the prosecutor. He would be legally entitled to investigate any suggestion of wrongdoing, whether the actions were reported by government employees, citizens, the White House or the Congress. He would also have the authority to initiate a probe.

Although such a prosecutor could very well be a whistleblower's best friend, it seems unlikely that such a bill could make its way through the Congress. Committee staffers who may be looking at this legislation believe that such a powerful new office would in the eyes of members be too threatening to governmental stability.

In addition, the Institute for Policy Studies—which is sponsoring seminars and meetings of whistleblowers—has offered a "model statute." It includes a provision to make "government officials individually liable for discriminating against employees who exercise broadly interpreted disclosure rights." Adds IPS: "Workers may release information to Congress or their unions and they are granted the right to publicly criticize agency actions, especially where there is substantial evidence of wrongdoing. . . . Violators of workers' rights would be subject to discharge and punitive damage." Again, as with the Nader legislation, this sort of law will probably seem heretical to the 95th Congress.

Finally, Senator Proxmire is offering one simple reform. His bill would permit any citizen, including federal employees, to petition the Justice Department to start criminal proceedings against a federal official who is accused of a felony. If the Justice Department failed to prosecute after 180 days, the citizen would have the specific right to petition the federal court. The advantage of the Proxmire plan is to give whistleblowers more leverage and, simultaneously, avoid the creation of another administrative agency. Most important, this measure can escape the politically potent conservative charge that there will be "more bureaucrats." Hence, its chances of passage are greater.

In mid-January one whistleblower named Dale Kuehn, formerly of the Federal Energy Administration, received an anonymous tax-free cashier's check for $10,000. Kuehn had accused his FEA superiors of silencing an investigation into oil and natural gas deals in Florida. In an apparent reenactment of "The Millionaire" TV series, a foundation executive from northern California had decided to reward him.

But in the near future it seems certain that Uncle Sam will not emulate the west coast philanthropist. As legislative history shows, significant attempts aimed at the protection of federal employees are bound to fail. At best, there could be some resistance to increasing the power of federal managers. However, at least for the nxt few years it looks like the conscientious worker will either have to suffer in silence; or blow the whistle and suffer the consequences.

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THE STAGE

Arthur Kopit's *Wings* is a deceptively simple play. In eighty minutes, played without an intermission, it follows Emily Stilson from her first baffled perception that something is wrong—the onset of a stroke—to a kind of clarity, "from fragmentation to integration," as Kopit says in a production note to the script. Disoriented, unable to understand where she is or what has happened, she remains alert, aware, exasperated that doctors and nurses will not (cannot) hear or comprehend her responses. The clutter of movement, sound, light, color that surrounds her begins to sort itself out, to take on recognizable shapes, and she begins to perceive the distance between the words that come from her mouth and their images inside her head, and to build the bridges that make communication possible. She moves from isolation to connection—with her therapist, the doctors, other patients struggling with a similar relearning process—but her final perception is that she has her own way to make.

Although my description may give that impression, *Wings* is not a clinical play. In Kopit's hands, from Mrs. Stilson's point of view, the hospital routine becomes a poetic evocation of separation, at times menacing, comic, strangely beneficent. Working in and with this transformation of reality is the central metaphor of the play, the one that provides its title. Mrs. Stilson, we learn, was once a barnstorming pilot, a performer who walked the wings of a plane. Images of flight and wing-walking come all through the play, sometimes in a fragmentary way, sometimes sustained until the invasion of outside noises, outside demands route her attempts to feel her way into the memories on which her damaged brain has a tenuous hold. The play ends in a monologue in which her present situation, her present struggle becomes flight. She is lost, flying in the dark, when she sees a lighted village, an intoxicating promise of rescue which is in fact dangerous since there is no place to land and her attraction to the light may make her stay until her gasoline is gone and a crash inevitable. She forces herself into the darkness again and once free, unfrightened, she finds her way to her destination. As she reaches the end of her speech, there is a sudden terrifying flapping—a sound that represents the noise of the airplane on which she once performed—and then a sudden burst of not quite intelligible speech. Mrs. Stilson has presumably suffered a second stroke, a fatal one, but the effect is neither one of final defeat nor of sentimental escape. The wing-walking metaphor that accompanies her initial movement from panic to uneasy adjustment now follows her into a new adventure. For the audience—for me, at least—it was a moment of exhilaration. "Oh my, yes, and here it goes then out . . . there I think on . . . wings? Yes . . . Thank you."

This may seem an unusual play to have come from Arthur Kopit, but his strength as a playwright lies in his unpredictability. Occasionally, when Mrs. Stilson or one of the other patients loses control, the words turn to gibberish which is, in fact, a kind of cute wordplay recalling the author of *Oh Dad, Poor Dad, Mama's Hung You in the Closet and I'm Feelin' So Sad*. The clever young man who burst on the New York theatrical scene with *Oh Dad* in 1962 began to run down in the mid-1960s. After the publication of *The Day the Whores Came Out to Play Tennis and Other Plays* (1965), an unprepossessing collection, he was silent until 1968, when *Indians* opened in London. That play with its odd combination of slapstick and pain, of history and myth, is one of the best American plays of the last dozen years, a complicated examination of the American penchant for myth-making and its effect on both the makers and the made. There were several plays written after *Indians*, but they remain largely unknown, although *Secrets of the Rich* will be published later this Summer. I saw a scene of it in rehearsal at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center a couple of years ago and found it funny, but it, like *Oh, Dad* and *Indians*, is hardly preparation for a work so clean, so tight, so enclosed as *Wings*.

Although Kopit plainly deserves praise for the creation of *Wings*, it is impossible to do justice to the Yale Repertory Theatre production of the play without commenting on the remarkable performance of Constance Cummings as Mrs. Stilson. When I set off to see *Wings*, I carried an image of Cummings that was more than thirty years old. I know that she has had a distinguished stage career, most of it in England, but she was fixed in my mind as the priggish Ruth in the movie version of *Blithe Spirit* (1945). Anyone who has seen that film lately knows that even then she had an expert sense of timing and of intonation, but the demands of Coward's script do not begin to approach those of Kopit's play. So much of *Wings* depends on an Emily Stilson whose every hesitation, every stumble conveys not only the broken surface of communication but the frustrated mind behind it. The sudden assured rushes of language that turn to incomprehensibility must carry the desperate need and the promise of success. The other, high-flying Emily Stilson must be apparent in the woman who feels her way along a sentence as though she were moving slowly out the wing of her plane. The Yale production will be gone by the time this review appears. *Wings* is promised for Broadway in the Fall and presumably Cummings will repeat her original role. If so, my testimony has a utilitarian value—it may send someone to the theater. If not, I still

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need to affirm that Constance Cummings's Mrs. Stilson is one of the most intelligent, most moving performances I have ever seen on stage. GERALD WEALES

DRIVE, HE SAID

THE SCREEN

In *The Driver*, as the title character (Ryan O'Neal) is about to junk the getaway car he has just driven in a casino stick-up, he first throws something—a nail file?—onto the front seat. When the cop in charge of the case (Bruce Dern) finds the car, his men bring him whatever it is. "Oh," he says, examining it and smiling to himself, "A cowboy." This arch remark is interesting in a couple of ways. What the cop means by "cowboy," I take it, is somebody like The Lone Ranger or John Wayne. The item left to be found in the car is a little flourish, a bit of bravado, which gives the driver's work personality, and this is what makes him a "cowboy." The epithet hints that there is about this driver something of the rugged individualism, the singularity of character, of the Western hero. What makes the hint interesting is the fact that it is only a hint. In the current action film, a vestige like this is all that's left of the sort of traditional hero Wayne played in *Stagecoach* or *Red River*.

Aside from this one minor (and not quite appropriate) detail, *The Driver* is a film which admits very self-consciously that the only thing to survive from the old action film is the action itself. The subject of the films that John Ford and Howard Hawks made was people, not events, and the purpose of each action sequence was to develop the characters in some way. The action allowed the hero to express his love for the heroine, or gave his sidekick a chance to demonstrate his loyalty, etc. In *The Driver*, on the other hand, the hero doesn't love the heroine and has no sidekick. He has nothing except his driving, which he performs with the single-mindedness of a samurai. The result is that he has no character either, at least none that could be developed. His driving *is* his character. He exists in an absolute and absolutely static condition, which makes him a pretty dull fellow.

This human condition—or rather, a lack of one—is to be found in most action films these days. The only thing that distinguishes *The Driver* is that it emphasizes the fact. It goes as far as it can to abstract the characters and render them featureless. In the first place, there is their anonymity. They have no names, but are simply "the driver," "the cop," or "the girl." Similarly, they live in an unnamed and unrecognizable American city—the kind of city that has small bars, supermarkets, walk-up flats, a train station, and one legit casino, which is to say a city at once both completely familiar and purely hypothetical. The setting is vague, amorphous. And on top of that, everyone leads an extraordinarily insular life. All the characters in the film both live and work utterly alone. This is even true of the cop, who operates out of an unidentified van rather than a squad room or police headquarters. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* says at one point that the nature of art is "to give to airy nothingness a local habitation and a name." But in *The Driver* we are purposely made to remain in airy nothingness.

Outside of these chase scenes, the action itself is also cryptic to the point of being unreadable. Typical is that incident where the driver leaves in the car something—we can't see what—from which the cop deduces somehow—we can't fathom how—that the driver is a "cowboy." The effect of all this gray and fuzzy context is to focus our attention exclusively on the driving, which is spectacular and, admittedly, all the more spectacular for the mindlessness of the rest of the movie. The atmospheric vacuum in the film does in some way intensify the action. It distills and purifies the action until *The Driver* has become a kind of over-perfection of the summer "entertainment" movie. (All through July and August each year I feel as if I'm being force-fed sherbert in order to clear my palate for the heavy cuisine of the Film Festival in October.)

The peculiarities of the appeal this sort of film has are perhaps apparent from the fact that the best scene in the movie is one where the driver isn't even playing for keeps. He's just giving a demonstration. Some "shooters from downtown" want him to drive for a bank robbery they're doing, but express doubt whether he's worth the price he charges. He invites them to get in the back seat of their Mercedes while he takes the wheel, and then he proceeds to execute spin outs, drive at high speed in reverse, thread the concrete pillars in an underground garage, knock the valve heads off of standpipes, carom off walls and drive under parked trucks until the car has literally been destroyed around its passengers. It's quite a show, but it also demonstrates the extreme thinness of this sort of movie. The truth is that the scenes where the driver is actually being pursued by cops or other criminals aren't any more exciting than this gratuitous demonstration. They aren't even as exciting, for elements of suspense and danger for the characters add nothing to the stunt work behind the wheel here. How could they, when we care nothing for the characters in the first place?

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

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JEWS AND OTHERS

SAUL MALOFF

THE SPIKY title of Alfred Kazin's tumultuous memoir demands that we attend and come to terms with it before we are released to turn to the text. The secret is out, the challenge flung at our feet. Defiant, clamorously self-assertive, it taunts and proposes to intimidate us. It is daunting or outrageous; but there is no overlooking or getting around it. No doubt consciously the jacket design echoes and fulfills the intention: there it is, like sticks of dynamite, dazzling white set against stark black; and beneath it, the sapper's name, also vertically set, also white on black. The warning reads:

NEW
YORK
JEW
ALFRED
KAZIN

and you may take it or leave it, but you can make no mistake about it. *The trespasser will feel, and is meant to feel, quite drained, morally exhausted, by the time he has cleared the underbrush of his responses and seen plain or obscure what lies beneath the tangle. From the photograph on the back of the dust jacket Kazin regards the commotion with a certain dour amusement, the eyes skeptical, shrewd, dismissive, the closed mouth set in a thin, damp, mirthless smile. The embarrassed Jews and the shocked goyim—what will they make of it?

Now, deep in the belly or archaic brain of America, a New York Jew (or newyorkjew) is a Jew from anywhere (unless he is from your hometown and went to high school with you, in which case, if he wore the school tie and kept his voice down and his hands still while speaking softly or not at all unless to regale you with jew-baiting jokes, preferably blue—in which case he was a "white Jew" and one of your best friends), from anywhere in the U.S. of A. who will rob you blind, even though he already owns the country, and jew you down out of a sulphurous compound of avarice, a lust for vengeance and the pleasure he takes in cunningly outsmarting the heathens in any transaction. Because you play by the rules, you can't beat him; his slyness is inbred, instinctive, tribal, implanted in the blood, and was further refined in the Business School of Jew York University. And so on. . . .

Clearly, this is not a caricature of Kazin's readers. Gorillas don't read literary critics and memoirists. But gentlemen do; and there is, or was, a kind of gentleman, generally but not always an academic, who may be thought of as a far subtler, fine-line version of the charcoal cartoon: hairless, willowy, colorless, in fact bloodless, genteel, prim, reproving. Distaste, expressed by pursed mouth, was the closest he came to feeling anything so coarse as emotion. Emotion, indeed, was "foreign," alien, a cultural contaminent, so to speak Mediterranean, Aegean, Adriatic, Caribbean, certainly not Atlantic, given to raised voices, wide gesticulation, stridency, hysteria, shrieking or at least loud laughter, weeping, wildly fluctuating moods, erratic moodiness, elation and melancholy—joy and sorrow and nameless emotions noisily vented. Lamentable. Flamboyant. Deplorable taste in clothes, wives, children, parents. Incredibly, such persons were suddenly their *colleagues*. While English was nominally their native tongue, they spoke it in gutteral accents wild, heavy traces of steerage clinging to their vowels, consonants, intonation, their molars and tonsils visible. They came from teeming tenements in such positively anthropological habitats as the Lower East Side and Brownsville; and now they were infesting the universities, teaching Old Norse, Anglo-Saxon and Middle English, the Metaphysical Poets, the Puritan Divines! Oh, dear.

And in keeping with their rampant emotionality, their intellectual and cultural lives were (what shall one say?) unkempt, disorderly, unruly, given to wild excitements and enthusiasms, love and hate and nothing in between. Professional interest is one thing; but when it came to books and ideas those exotics behaved like enflamed, or betrayed, lovers. Moderation was one of the very many words they did not seem to understand. Their passions were barbaric as the cut of their coats.

Gentlemen do not utter the word Jew; if they must, they say Jewish, as in Jewish men; and certainly they would never think of using, except perhaps in the private chapel of their minds, any of the gorilla grunt-words. (A kike, goes the sad old [Jewish] joke, is a Jewish gentleman who has just left the room.) Kazin is fond of saying that, as a critic, he can read a writer's mind. I am doing a little mind-reading when I say that, in selecting his title from among twenty or thirty possible ones, he hoped to goad madness in old adversaries, actual and imagined, for whom New York and Jew are synonymous terms, the first marginally a euphemism for the unutterable second.

Kazin accepts with belligerant pride and pleasure amounting at times to glee large elements of the caricature: his literary and self-portrayed personal manners are far from impeccable; he can be irascible, nasty, malicious, vex-

**New York Jew, by Alfred Kazin, Knopf. $10.95 [307 pp.].*

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ing, outrageous, and he would like us to know this; he is mad about literature, no less now in his ambassadorial period than in his brilliant youth—an enthusiast, an excited panegyrist, crazy about books and set fire to by ideas, with the wide-eyed passion of first discovery; as a stylist, and he is a distinctive one, he runs from hectic, at times overblown, high eloquence and sweeping intensity, velocity, emotionality—the grand effect—to little verbal infelicities and oddities of phrasing, as if in the rush to reach the height he stumbles through the underbrush and lowlands, indifferent to or disdainful of them: an odd mixture of dazzling, gleaming artfulness and crude rough-draft heedlessness. In that range there are no lows or middles—only highs. The memoirist sees his life as high drama enacted at a furious pitch frequently marked by sturm-and-drang and shading off at times into melodrama, as if a life worth living must be continuously charged with significance or it is nothing: a religio-dramatic view of life. If one moved very cautiously, making allowances for the play of fancy, and were willing to risk lapsing into absurdity and to include among the risks that there is no such thing in any hard sense, a case could be made out that these qualities and views, acting together, describe a kind of writing that may plausibly be called New York Jewish.

But New York Jewish intellectuals real and mythical are fated to be "anxiously Americanized": out there is a continent waiting to be possessed, and resisting the embrace. At home in the "Jew land" of the West Side of Manhattan, relaxed in "our old profane New York style," Kazin feels himself to be an alien and interloper in the great midlands; on a train rushing through the empty darkness he discovers that "America was endless. In a developing panic I felt I had been thrown out into outer space. I knew no one." All the "pushing at the world to let him in" will not get him all the way there; native wit, talent, hard work, infinite ambition, Jewish superego will not quite allow him to feel completely at home in America. How is it possible to be at once uncompromisingly a Jew and easily, comfortably, un-selfconsciously American? (In order to ask this at all, we must ask it naively and pass over in uneasy silence all complex questions of definition. "What is an American?" remains an open question and we are still trying to imagine and invent answers.)

Yet it is to the literature and writers of the "native ground" that Kazin has always been most deeply attracted; to the literature and writers, that is, of Protestant America of the old dispensation. Here are light and air, vitality and talent, zeal and passion; here is spaciousness large as America. But in some sense the continent lay empty until its writers discovered, populated and invested it with these other qualities—created it; and it is in that created country that an outsider can be naturalized, though first, perhaps, he must invent himself. Fresh out of the "Jew land" of the Brownsville ghetto and its academic terminus City College (of its legendary period in the Thirties), Kazin sits day in and day out—lives!—in the monumental NY Public Library reading for what would become *On Native Grounds*, his landmark study of the emergence of modern American literature, absorbing the America made habitable by its creators, easing his way into the country through their intercession, taking it in by swallowing it whole. Out of the "brown decades" of the exploding post-bellum America the "greatest power instrument in history" is being forged and the "new literature was being created inside an old century—proud, stormy, yet elegant"; but the Library itself, that great place of rest and culture situated at the center of Manhattan's cankered heart comes to signify for him—the Library with its own fading elegance, marble stairs, golden tables, spacious reading rooms, turn-of-the-century "intellectual insurgence and radical hope that bedrocked my book" —the "powerful amenity that I craved for my own life, a world of power in which my own people had moved about as strangers."

"Powerful amenity" is an odd phrase; at first glance the words seem almost to nullify each other: certainly one does not naturally suggest the other. And the "world of power" from which the immigrant Jews were by the nature of things excluded suggests (what?) bigness, dominance, acquisitiveness and aggrandizement, exploitation and oppression, as Kazin learned from his socialist forebears and by looking out the door—but it in no way suggests amenity; least of all does it suggest amenity. For the strong meaning of the phrase, we must look elsewhere, and read the mind behind the book, since Kazin has nothing further explicitly to say about this powerful craving.

We must look, in fact, to Protestant America; and in particular to the figure of Edmund Wilson and what the great man represented for the New York Jew. Wilson stands astride the book like a colossus, offering himself as the ideal example of the writer-intellectual totally devoted to the life of the mind, a man who "had exposed himself to literature as the maximum experience of his life," who "lived *in* literature as he did not anywhere else," and to whom, from the beginning of their friendship, Kazin "felt altogether related." That Wilson could also be "eccentric and cranky, unself-conscious, and a 'character'" are signs of election rather than personal flaws, and further evidence of his fierce, exclusive devotion to books and ideas, study and learning; to a life of reading and writing.

Increasingly with time Wilson grew even more curmudgeonly. His old America was gone; the America he saw "depicted in *Life* magazine" was shoddy beyond bearing; the world was being deluged by solecisms, errors in fact and judgment, faulty translations, pedantry, ignorance, excess and folly everywhere; and to correct these, to shore up standards, was not only a matter of intellectual honor but a final defense of culture and civilization (if any was left): a "patrician belief that through style everything, even in his disordered country, would yet fall into

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place. . . . This insistence on 'correctness'—as of a judge or minister or national leader in the days when a few solitary geniuses molded American culture—became basic to the sense of his role in American life." The last American man of letters, the great anachronism . . . now depended on 'style' in an aristocratic-political sense more familiar to English universities and the House of Commons than to American intellectuals."

Something wondrously strange happens here. Kazin sees "a kind of political majesty to all this. Behind the pressing urge to correctness, I saw the moral significance of 'right words' to Wilson's class—the professional gentry of lawyers, preachers, educators, scientists, which from the time of New England's clerical oligarchs had remained the sustaining class of American intellectual life. Despite all the eager beavers from the newer stocks, the few figures with the most unquestioned influence still represented—and often in the person of Edmund Wilson himself—the old American clerisy." The "eager beavers from the newer stocks"! The "newer stocks" with "their pretentious social science theories and academic careers and ridiculous 'New Criticism'!" On the one side, are academic barbarians and vandals; and on the other the old American clerisy. The usurping second- and third-generation Jewish intellectuals, that is to say, and the beleaguered old-line American moral and intellectual aristocracy. Where Kazin's allegiance lies seems plain. Never mind that the *argument* might prove difficult, if not impossible, plausibly to sustain. As *drama*—as a drama of the mind—it is fascinating, and entirely credible. The New York Jew as the Last Puritan, legitimate heir of the old American clerisy.

The surprising last scene in this closet drama is a perfect fusion of life and art. The scene—a two-part juxtaposed scene—is also immensely moving. Kazin's old father, estranged from the synagogue and Jewish tradition, lies dying a cruel death in a "nursing home," his body and spirit broken, his mind a shambles. Astonishingly, randomly, inconsequentially, a forgotten prayer out of his long-buried childhood, or the first word-phrase of it, floats unwilled up and into his brave attempts at conversation with his son, the prayer children once recited upon awakening in the morning: *Lefonecho* . . . Before Thy Face . . . Before Thy Face I render thanks to Thee, Everlasting King . . . *Lefonecho*. At his grave Kazin, estranged from the synagogue and a stranger to the ancient tongue of his people, fumblingly recites the awesome *Kaddish*, the prayer for the dead which does not mention death.

In Wellfleet, in his lonely eminence, Wilson is dying. Famously a swallower whole of the world's tongues, ancient and modern, he has made himself a Hebraist (in the grand old Protestant clerical tradition and more immediately in order to carry out *properly* his celebrated work on the Dead Sea Scrolls), and even something of a Yiddishist. As a kind of parting gift,

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as a father might to a son, he gives the Kazins a "magnificently desolate Audubon print." In the face of death, he finds his ancestral Presbyterianism of no help. "Was it possible that Jews had an answer?" he asks Kazin. "The question was as delightful to me [Kazin writes] as Edmund's writing that he had lost himself in four thousand years of Jewish history and could not get out." The grand old man is greatly taken with a Hebrew maxim, recited by faithful Jews in synagogue as they come to the end of the year's prescribed reading: *Hazak Hazak Vinithazak* . . . Be Strong, Be Strong, and Let us Strengthen One Another! The bequest is engraved in Hebrew on Wilson's tombstone in the Wellfleet cemetery.

Sheer fancifulness, of course, a fugitive, whimsical, self-indulgent notion of the kind New York Jews such as I are given to indulge; but if this were drama I might be powerfully tempted to say in the end the son has become the father, and the father the son. New York Jew and patrician old American meeting on the ground they held in common. Both Jews, both American.

* * *

(These reflections on themes and motifs are not intended as a review. I should add, therefore, that the book is prodigally rich as personal and intellectual history, an important work by a notable figure in American letters, and as such essential reading. Not the least of its gifts is a large gallery of the kind of brief, vivid, revealing portraits which Kazin has fashioned into a minor art-form and made virtually his own: Isaac Rosenfeld, Bellow, Lionel Trilling (as a "false" Jew in a complex disguise), Agee, Henry Luce, Richard Hofstadter, Stark Young, Van Wyck Brooks, Delmore Schwartz, Randall Jarrell, Robert Lowell, Paul Goodman, Hannah Arendt, among others. His "portrait" of the NY Public Library should be cut in stone at the base of the lions' paws.)

BOOKS

THE SHORT STORY—FOUR COLLECTIONS

ROBERT PHILLIPS

In Dreams Begin Responsibilities and Other Stories

DELMORE SCHWARTZ

New Directions, $3.95 paper [202 pp.]

Elbow Room

JAMES ALAN McPHERSON

Atlantic-Little, Brown, $7.95 [242 pp.]

Under My Wings Everything Prospers

CURTIS HARNACK

Doubleday, $7.95 [216 pp.]

Night-Side

JOYCE CAROL OATES

Vanguard, $10 [370 pp.]

The new interest in the life and work of Delmore Schwartz, generated by James Atlas's recent biography and Saul Bellow's roman à clef, *Humboldt's Gift*, has produced an audience for this useful compilation of many of Schwartz's short stories. Edited and with an introduction by Atlas, it preserves almost every story of Schwartz's worth saving, including two which appear in a book by Schwartz for the first time—"The Commencement Day Address" (originally published in 1937 but never collected) and "SCREENO" (completed but never even typed-up by Schwartz). It is to Atlas's credit that he has recognized the value of each and added them to the Schwartz canon.

Indeed, if one had any doubts about Mr. Atlas's acumen as a critic (there could never be any doubt as to his ability as a biographer) the present volume rests such thoughts. I really could argue with only one exclusion from this story collection, that being "The Statues," from Schwartz's *The World Is a Wedding*, a beautiful, strange and moving parable which belongs somewhere fairly near the top of any list of Schwartz's fiction. (Of the unpublished stories, perhaps "Bank Night" might have found a place here.) On the other hand, Atlas is quite right to drop "A Bitter Farce," which also appeared in *The World Is a Wedding*. It was then, and remains, a mere anecdote on antisemitism. Of the stories in Schwartz's second collection, *Successful Love*, Atlas is correct again to reprint only "The Track Meet." The others (except perhaps the wistful "The Gift") show no trace of the irony and obsessiveness of his earlier moral and philosophical tales.

What we have, then, is a new book composed of eight Schwartz stories, beginning with the deservedly famous and much-anthologized "In Dreams Begin Responsibilities"—that dream-like meditation upon consciousness and one's inability to alter the past; and culminating in "SCREENO"—a totally unknown story which also occurs in the theater of the dream. Between the two are works which make it clear that Schwartz wrote two distinctly different kinds of story—poetic parables, and stories of social commentary. The latter type have been celebrated (celebrated, at least, by Atlas and by Irving Howe, in their prefatory pieces and elsewhere); these include "The World Is a Wedding"

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and "New Year's Eve." Yet at least half the point of these seems to be knowing one is a hit at Paul Goodman and his circle, the other a depiction of the old *Partisan Review* crowd. While I fail to share enthusiasm for these, they deserve being reprinted to demonstrate Schwartz's range. At the very least, they display his legendary wit ("Let your conscience be your bride" and "I love my wife, but Oh you Id.")

Schwartz's sociological stories have also been praised for their portrayal of the Jew in the new world, "the world of our fathers." For me, too much has been made of Schwartz's "Jewishness." It would be good to remember that one of his greatest poems, "Starlight's Intuition Pierced the Twelve," is a rumination upon the thoughts of Christ's apostles. And in the more dreamlike, parablelike, non-sociological stories, the title story, "SCREENO," "The Track Meet," "The Statues," and "The Commencement day Address," Schwartz's writing shimmers longer and has more universal targets. Indeed, they contain images and epiphanies as strong as in many of his best poems. "The Commencement Day Address," as a matter of fact, contains all the seeds and much of the language of one of his most famous poems, "In the Naked Bed, in Plato's Cave," which perhaps explains why Schwartz chose not to include that particular story in either of his collections. With their climaxes of Joycean epiphanies, these dream parables prove Schwartz to be a highly original and disturbing fiction writer, as this passage from the conclusion of "The Track Meet" shows:

> ". . . You don't escape from nightmare by waking up, you know. And if what occurred on the field were merely imaginary and unreal and merely your own private hallucination, then the evil that has terrified you is rooted in your own mind and heart. Like the rest of us," Low said scornfully, "you not only know more than you think you know but more than your are willing to admit. Look at yourself! *Just look at yourself!*"
>
> I tried once more to stand up, and awoke, and found myself standing up, staring, in a sweat of confusion and dread, not at the sky but at the looking-glass above the chest of drawers next to my dishevelled bed. The face I saw was livid and swollen with barbarous anger and unbearable shame.

Unlike Schwartz, James Alan McPherson has devoted practically all his writing to the short story. *Elbow Room* is his second collection in eight years. And, unlike Schwartz, there is no division in his subject matter and technique. From the beginning he has written about what he knows best —the "Black Experience" in America. Yet because (unlike many well-meaning but unreadable black writers) McPherson has never taken the color of his skin as an excuse for not learning the craft of fiction, his tales ultimately become not so much about the black condition as the human condition. He writes of difficult struggles for survival, yet his sense of humor allows him to dwell on moments which otherwise might prove unbearable.

The author has said that each of the twelve narratives has to do with "breaking free of stereotypes, whether of race, status, or sensibility." This is true enough. Certainly the stories are structured upon visible conflicts: North versus South, rich versus poor, respectable versus unrespectable, educated versus ignorant, hardheads versus progressives. All come to play in one marvelous story, "The Faithful," concerning an old-fashioned black barber who refuses to cut the new Afro styles. These conflicts are also at the heart of "A Loaf of Bread," perhaps the book's best story, concerning a small ghetto shopkeeper and his strife with the changing community.

An example of McPherson's synthesis of humanity and humor is found in the following exchange, from the story, "The Story of a Dead Man." It is between the well-wishing narrator and one Billy Renfro, whom the former visits in prison as a favor to his mother. The narrator is sententiously attempting to urge Billy toward some of the "broader options available to the man in possession of saleable knowledge." He maps out his own future in terms of "stepladders or subgoals," climaxing with an affirmation of the Good Life to be lived in Los Angeles:

> Billy smiled and gave several agreeable nods. But when my conversation came to dwell on the wonders of Los Angeles, he interrupted suddenly. "Lookahere," he said, "How 'bout runnin' cross the road and get me a hot sausage sandwich, heavy on the mustard, and a big orange soda."
>
> I looked hard at him and wanted to weep. "Is that *all* you want?" I asked.
>
> Billy chewed steadily. "No," he answered, looking out over the crowded room. "Bring me a side of fries, hold the salt."

Most of the stories are *that* pointed and heart-breaking. There is only one misfire—"Widows and Orphans," a slow revelation of a seemingly bountiful and kind person of achievement who is shown to be, in fact, a first-class bitch. The plot seems too patently modeled upon the likes of *The Bad and the Beautiful* and *All About Eve*. With this single exception, *Elbow Room* is a book of singular achievement, and deserves the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction just awarded it.

Curtis Harnack had written several novels set in the American Mid-West and a book about Iran before his last book, a series of memory pieces titled *We Have All Gone Away*, reached my attention. It was delicate and immensely talented, founded on sentiment but never sinking to sentimentality. The only book of reminiscences to which it could be compared is Glenway Wescott's *Goodbye, Wisconsin*. Now we have Harnack's *Under My Wings Everything Prospers*, which drops the guise of memoir and is presented as a collection of seven stories. The title is ironic: few of Harnack's protago-

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nists "prosper." They *endure*. The collection reveals 50-year-old Harnack's remarkable grasp of the ideas and language of today's younger generation as well as that of his own.

One story, "White Blood," occupies almost half the book. Possibly too ambitious for its length, it is "about" crossing lines—color lines, social lines, the line between adolescence and adulthood, morality and promiscuity. It is also about that old theme, appearance versus reality. Somehow, the shorter stories have more bite. "Mentor" concerns everyone's failure to live up to the expectations of others. "My Son, Stuart," depicts one father's discovery of his own son's callowness and emptiness. "The Mistake," perhaps the least ambitious piece, is nevertheless a perfectly realized one, a story in which the final sentence says everything, resoundingly. And "Madness" is a leisurely chronicle of one woman's flight from and first acceptance of mental disorder. In his portrayal of Nora Kemp's life, telescoped within so few pages, Harnack shows himself to be a masterful creator of character.

But it is the opening story which truly dazzles. "Voice of the Town" seems to me a minor masterpiece. In its final fusion of myth, tableau, and drama, in its total reversal of the expected, in its encitement of pity and terror for its protagonist, LaVonne, the author has created a haunting work which deserves to be widely known.

Ever since her miscellaneous collection, *The Wheel of Love*, Joyce Carol Oates's story collections have been more than "mere" collections: they have been carefully constructed totalities, works in their own right. *Marriages and Infidelities* was an appropriate title for the plots of the stories it contained. *The Goddess* concerned women and girls. *Crossing the Border* is a meditation on just that.

Ms. Oates's newest collection is also more than a grab-bag. All 18 tales are concerned with borderline reality, what the author has called "that mysterious realm of the paranormal." *Night-Side* differs considerably from her early novels in that almost all the violence is mental rather than actual. With the exception of "The Blessing" (the volume's weakest story), these are interior tales—stories of individuals haunted by their own uneasinesses and anxieties. What is striking is how Ms. Oates manages to reconstruct the dreams and nightmares which afflict us all, reminding me of Henry James's statement, "The extraordinary is most extraordinary in that it happens to you and me." *Night-Side* is not, however, a book of the occult. Joyce Carol Oates's ghostly tales are related to the tradition of realism of Daniel DeFoe's "True Relation of the Apparition of One Mrs. Veal" rather than to the chains and clanks of Walpole or Mrs. Radcliffe.

It is impossible to "review" 18 stories in this space. I will say that *Night-Side* contains some of Ms. Oates's best and most interesting work. The title story is as gripping as an old-fashioned thriller. "The Translation" (in which one man's conception of his beloved, a foreigner, is shown to be only a manifestation of his translator's skill) is highly original. Other fine pieces are "The Sacrifice" and "Exile" (in which alter-egos or exterior projections of interior conditions lead the protagonists to their fates); "Further Confessions" (in which one man outwits fate); and "Daisy" (a study of the untenable position in which the "sane" are placed when their next-of-kin are judged "insane" —they are, in short, asked to play God).

"Daisy" explores this relationship in the lives of Bonham, an artist, and Daisy, his talented but disturbed daughter. In a state of weakness he signs a paper to commit her to a mental institution. Afterward he perceives the terrible things they have done to her:

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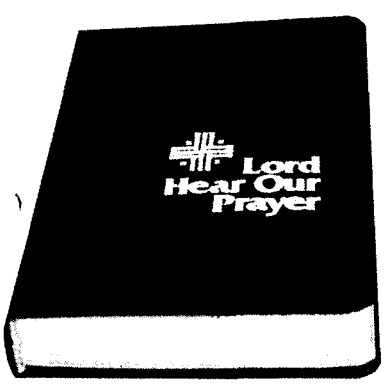

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what cause? Seeing her, he had burst into tears and demanded that she be released in his custody at once. No more of this!—no more. "From this day forward," he had shouted at them, "let everyone be free of pain! Let there be no more agony inflicted on human beings—do you hear? Do you hear? I'll make you hear!"

Bonham in his rage and Daisy in her infirmity recall James Joyce and his daughter, Lucia Anna, who (in the words of Joyce's biographer, Richard Ellman), "was to affect Joyce's life much more deeply than he would have believed possible." The disarray of Lucia Anna Joyce's mind and its possible sources in Joyce's own strange and nomadic life is at the heart of this accomplished tale, one of the best in an important collection.

A Concise History of the Catholic Church

THOMAS BOKENKOTTER

Doubleday, $10 [431 pp.]

JOHN JAY HUGHES

Church history as most Catholics have known it died during a dramatic speech on 1 December 1962, as the exciting first session of Vatican II approached its close. The speaker was a Belgian, Emil Josef De Smedt, Bishop of Bruges and a former professor of dogma. (Most Americans would be astonished to know how many European bishops, even today, gained reputations as scholars before being called to the episcopate—a state of affairs paralleled in this country only amongst the leaders of major universities.) De Smedt spoke on the three great vices of the modern church: triumphalism, clericalism, juridicism.

The first of this trinity was a new coinage. So apt was the term, however, that overnight "triumphalism" was on everyone's lips, and we began finding it everywhere. Too many works of church history, we discovered, were infected with this vice. When they were not exalting Catholic accomplishments, they were uncritical of questionable developments, or defensive about defects too glaring to be denied or overlooked.

What followed upon this discovery was as understandable as it was unfortunate. In the decade following the Council many Catholics were frankly ashamed of their heritage. Progressive theologians became adept at the Quantum Leap: from the New Testament (interpreted, often, in terms minimalistic enough to satisfy any old-fashioned liberal Protestant) to liberation theology, the death-of-God, dialogue with Marxism, or what-have-you. Students of theology seemed to assume that for nineteen centuries the church had been in a dark tunnel, from which it emerged only in 1962. Even "church history" became, in Catholic academic circles, a term of opprobrium. The "in" word was "historical theology."

The self-hatred represented in these developments, as in many others like them in the chaotic decade following the Council, was miles removed from the biblical idea of repentance, which offers the only sound basis for Christian renewal. Biblical repentance is never self-centered. It begins with God's mighty acts on behalf of people who have done nothing to merit them. Moved by reflection of this undeserved goodness, the sinner (collective or individual) returns to God, thus rediscovering his mercy.

Moreover renewal, to be successful, must always appeal to the best in the past, thus helping people to return to the authentic tradition from which they have departed. Triumphalism denies any essential departure, thus encouraging self-righteousness. Self-hatred denies any essential good in the tradition, which induces despair. Thomas Bokenkotter's new book avoids both pitfalls and points the way to genuine renewal.

I must confess to taking it up, however, with considerable skepticism. How could one possibly cover two thousand years of church history in four hundred pages? Either the account must be highly selective, and hence incomplete; or it must sink to a relentless chronicle of facts, dates, names, "trends," thus making history a crashing bore. Before I was halfway through the volume, these doubts had been dispelled. Here, I discovered, was church history for the non-specialist: reflecting the best of modern scholarship, recounting positive achievements without boasting, drawing attention to failures without wallowing in them, fully aware of the complex historical development in areas such as papacy and sacramental theology where, within living memory, Catholics have attempted to deny any significant development at all.

A priest of the archdiocese of Cincinnati with a Louvain doctorate and a previous book on Newman, Bokenkotter has taught church history for a decade at St. Gregory's Seminary in Cincinnati. His students are clearly fortunate to have had a teacher who knows how to make history come alive. The book contains many colorful vignettes: the trial of Dioscoros at Chalcedon; Henry IV and Gregory VII at Canossa; the holy but inept, if not wholly inept, Celestine V, the last Pope to resign his office; Boniface VIII substituting "resounding trumpet blasts of Latin" for argument or proof in the Bull *Unam sanctam*; the Roman populace running amok in the papal wine cellars following the election of Urban IV, the last man to reach the Papacy without being a cardinal; the anti-Pope, John XXIII, "a moral and spiritual cipher," at the Council of Constance, where upwards of seventy thousand visitors were crammed into thirty-two thousand beds; wild scenes of disorder at the Council of Basel, where the leaders of opposing factions "fought hand to hand to seize the rostrum, while their followers during the Mass faced each other like two armies." His description of Luther at the Diet of Worms, by contrast, falls disappointingly flat. But his account of Vatican II succeeds in conveying the excitement felt by so many at the time.

Inevitably there are weaknesses and slips. The burning of John Hus is called "immensely important," but left unexplained. After an excellent ac-

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count of Luther's theology, which rightly emphasizes that much of it was the rediscovery of half-forgotten Catholic truths, Bokenkotter ends the chapter lamely by saying that it was Calvinism which came to dominate the Protestant world, without ever describing Calvin's theology or explaining how it differed from Luther's. The account of the eighteenth century Rites Controversy fails to highlight for the general reader the disaster for two centuries of missionary endeavor of the Curia's decision to insist on rigid enforcement of Latin-rite rules in the mission field. In the confrontation with Hitler in 1933 the Vatican did not undercut the Catholic Center Party in Germany, as Bokenkotter states, following one of the many authorities who gets it wrong. And in his concluding account of post-Conciliar developments Bokenkotter concentrates on social issues, without mentioning the renewed worldwide interest in prayer and spirituality, of which the charismatic renewal is a symptom.

On balance, however, the book is a notable success. It may be warmly recommended to students of theology and to the educated general reader. Those concerned about the church's spiritual health will find it a welcome symptom of returning vigor and sanity. The patient has been cured of his triumphalism—but also of the amnesia to which, for a brief moment, it seemed he might succumb. For that one can only be deeply grateful.

Going After Cacciato

TIM O'BRIEN

Delacorte, $8.95 [338 pp.]

CELIA BETSKY

It is fashionable to play the cynic these days. To be apathetic, too. "Why should I go see *Coming Home*? I don't need to see another Vietnam movie," people say. It turns out they haven't seen any. A generation which protested the war in Vietnam and worried about getting out of the draft now agonizes over getting into law school, medical school, the country club.

Which makes Tim O'Brien's novel, *Going After Cacciato*, an exceptional achievement. Sent to Vietnam as an infantryman, he was honorably discharged as a sergeant with seven medals—and even more opposed to the war than when he started. Much of his bitterness was contained in his two earlier works, *If I Die in a Combat Zone* (1973) and *Northern Lights* (1975), but this one is different. It is a highly idealistic work and a surprisingly lyrical one, offering a grittily beautiful picture of a war none of the participants seem to support or understand, and a vision of peace, of transcendence, which turns American involvement in Vietnam into merely a hellish way station on the road to potential salvation.

In *Going After Cacciato* a motley group of soldiers of the "Third Squad" are sent after one of their number who has calmly gone AWOL in the direction of Paris. Like some grotesque caravan or a pilgrim band out of Chaucer, they manage to make it half way across the world in the space of six months, encountering an assortment of characters and a wild variety of adventures along the way. O'Brien's journey has more of the surrealism of Donald Barthelme's *The Dead Father*, another novel about a group search, than of the grim facts of Gloria Emerson or Michael Herr, yet it is his factuality that gives the book its eeriness. He creates a twentieth century *picaresque*, replete with comic touches (a doctor feeding a wounded soldier M&Ms for medicine), hairbreadth escapes, and people representative of the spectrum of humanity. Because of the ascending movement of the journey—the trip goes up into the mountains and to Laos, India, Iran, Turkey, Athens, and Paris—it also conveys O'Brien's conception of progress. Not only does "going after Cacciato" mean escape, liberation, it makes the men learn together, experience love and responsibility. It teaches the loner his obligation to others, it helps the fear-

"DANCES IN THE SPHERES OF LIGHT"

John Bennett's gift, notes Chad Walsh in his Foreword to this volume, is to see "*some of Eden's dew on all creatures... to look at the earth and its denizens with an eye both photographic and mythopoeic, and always loving.*"

Evoking in sharp images the characters of a series of animals seen in a zoo, Bennett celebrates the interlinked beauty of all God's creatures, convinced that "*The Paraclete sustains the otter dance and all the dances in the spheres of light.*"

John Bennett's poetry has appeared in *The New Yorker*, the *Anglican Theological Review* and elsewhere.

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ful conquer fear. As always with O'Brien, "the issue, of course, [is] courage"; not the courage to face the enemy, but to confront reality and push it closer to one's dreams and ideals, to accomplish the impossible.

The simplicity of O'Brien's language and statements, the dry remoteness of his tone, are deceptive, for they encompass a range of private emotions and universal conditions. He strips words of their ordinary meanings like a plane spraying defoliant and then pumps new life into them. The "enemy" is not the Vietcong but the cruelty of a battalion promotion board or the debilitating sameness of the war, which robs men of their sense of time and their ability to feel. "Mission" is another term which changes from military lingo into a mystical, almost religious task, without becoming freighted with the over-weight symbolism O'Brien used in his earlier work.

Cacciato, a symbolic figure always lurking just over the horizon, is, as far as can tell from his comrades' derogatory, joking descriptions, a sacred idiot, a "dumb," gum-chewing blob who thinks nothing of taking off on his incredible journey. The other soldiers don't even know his first name. They engage in a pursuit of his childlike innocence, booking onto a Cooks Tour of the mind which takes them from distrust to confidence, from brutality to civilization, from "running away" to heading towards something. Arrested several times as deserters or spies, they remain true to their own pragmatic legitimacy, pointing up that "deception" is all on the other side.

The story is told from the point of view of Paul Berlin, a son of Nick Adams with a twist. He is the young Hemingway rebel reversed, longing to go back to the "normalcy" of his Midwestern background, where his mother putters in her garden and stability is building houses and scouting fish and the stars with his contractor father. Berlin is a "daydreamer" whose waking reveries are concerned with making a better world, whose "only goal was to live long enough to establish goals worth living for," and who looks forward to the day when he can stop being afraid. His restless imagination may be what guides the men onwards —O'Brien deals in wishful thinking as much as in realities. It motivates Berlin to bank on hope, and there isn't much more to get the men through their fantastic ordeal.

The real spinner of dreams in all of this is O'Brien himself, who imparts to his storeytelling, be the journey real or not, the magic of travel through space and time. Images gleaned from books and travel brochures jell into reality, the word becomes flesh in both enjoyable and horrifying ways in the hands of a writer conversant with brutal facts as well as with the spiritual means to transform them. It is hard to admire the men he describes, but not to love them, and this is largely due to O'Brien's skill as a novelist, his ability to infuse suspense into the most unlikely situations, his wise sympathy which evokes laughter at the same times as it taps a pool of feeling. He seems no less committed than his protagonist to a moral evaluation of the world, of war, valor, peace, dedication, boredom. The most important thing his men learn—and it is precisely what they, and others, were prevented from learning in Vietnam—is to tell good from evil. Without detracting from the gusto of his writing, the sweep of his narrative, O'Brien shows how that knowledge can be acquired.

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IN BRIEF

CATHOLIC REVIVALISM: THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE, 1830-1900, *by Jay P. Dolan, Notre Dame*, $10. [268 pp.]

Jay Dolan is a "new social historian" who writes history from the bottom up rather than from the top down. In his first book, *The Immigrant Church*, he traced the impact of the Irish and Germans in transforming Catholicism from a small minority of 318,000 in 1830 to a sizeable group of 3,103,000 in 1860. By focusing on the parish instead of the diocese and on priests instead of bishops, Dolan told us how Catholics practiced their faith in the nineteenth century.

Catholic Revivalism is the story of the "Parish missions" and priests who came from Europe to preach the gospel of acceptance to the faithful. Among these missionaries were Jesuits, Redemptorists, and Paulists who promoted devotional exercises to the Virgin Mary or the Sacred Heart for the purpose of fostering growth by conversions and reentries, restoring parish unity, and reinforcing the need for a strong authority figure. The end product was a docile and obedient laity who paid, prayed, and obeyed.

Dolan points out the similarities between Catholic and Protestant revivalism. Both traced their origins back to seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe; both were composed of itinerant preachers who wanted to convert their audiences; both placed an "emphasis on personal religion and a rigorous, individual moral code (which) overshadowed any attempt at a reconstruction of the social order." The charismatic movement of today, though emphasizing the Holy Spirit rather than the son of God, is similar to the revivalism of the nineteenth century because it also tries to renew the piety of the people by stressing the work of God in the hearts of individuals.

Catholic Revivalism is an important work that deserves a wider audience than usually accorded books from university presses. LARRY MADARAS

ON PRESS, by *Tom Wicker, Viking*, $10.95. [271 pp.]

Tom Wicker's anecdotes are often self-deprecating and amusing; his inside accounts of editorial decisions, fascinating, but beyond their attractive personal emphasis, they generally illustrate a larger point about the duties and limitations of the press.

Wicker argues that journalism cannot be "objective" and that it therefore must report its reasonable inferences (as the *Times* failed to do with the Bay of Pigs story). He fears that the

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press, eager to stay in the Establishment, "shirks its responsibilities" through an excess of caution, often in deference to "that magic phrase . . . national security."

His case is impressive because he clearly loves his "trade" and because his telling examples are among the great stories of our time: My Lai (rejected by the press for over a year), the Glomar Explorer (wherein William Colby manipulated the press to cover up a CIA failure), the Pentagon Papers and the Supreme Court (a "victory" for the press that could rebound against free expression and in favor of prior restraint), Daniel Schorr and the Pike Report (in which Schorr's losing his job could well intimidate other reporters).

Penetrating the glamor of power, Wicker distinguishes personalities from character; he sees abuses in Kennedy and Ford as readily as in Johnson and Nixon.

Tom Wicker is rightly proud of the associations and independence the *Times* allows him; as a result of his professionalism, his engaging critique rests on a compelling personal authority. It complements Liebling and *The First Casualty*.

ROBERT L. KING

LYING: *Moral Choice In Public And Private Life, by Sissela Bok, Pantheon, $10.95* [315 pp.]

Lying by Sissela Bok is a timely book in applied ethics. The timing is right since, according to some national polls, 69 percent of the American people agree that over the last ten years their political leaders have consistently lied to them. Bok agreeably and soundly argues that government deception is harmful to a democratic polity and is rarely the only available option, even in times of dire crisis.

But *Lying* is a work of applied ethics, so Bok does not allow her readers to inspect solely the rarely noble and usually self-serving deceptions of those in high places. Her discussion is applicable to the dilemmas of everyday life and includes chapters on lying to the sick and dying, lying to children, and lying to protect clients and colleagues. Is it not, she candidly asks herself, arrogant and myopic to compare such different types of deception as bargaining in an Eastern bazaar, the polite white lies of everyday life, the lie for national defense, and the lie to thieves and enemies?

No, it's not; at least for Bok. The book works well and can be read by a wide audience, not only by those in professions such as lawyers, doctors, social science researchers and teachers, whose work creates daily dilemmas for truth-telling, but also by many others as well. The book is judicious in both the practical and philosophical sense. She characterizes a utilitarian ethic as shallow but she is also uncomfortable with an absolutist Kantian prohibition against all acts of deception. Her strategy is to honor the moral gravity of Kant's absolutism while respecting the complexity of life. She offers a "principle of veracity" which contends that only where a lie is a *last* resort can one even *begin* to consider whether it is justified. She rightly observes that if such reasoning were taken seriously, and the criteria of benevolent deception were publicly argued and defended, there would be justification for very, very few acts of deception, whether in medicine, law, social research, or government.

This is a lucid and sensible essay in applied ethics, but perhaps two quibbles will be allowed. Although Bok is especially concerned with patterns of deception, there is surprisingly little sociological analysis in the book. Moral ideals are never entirely autonomous and, as Max Weber observed, in order to be effective they must appeal either to ruling groups or groups who are ascending. There is not enough attention to the ecology of power in *Lying*. My second quibble is Bok's pragmatic decision to go beyond the notion that epistemology is somehow prior to ethics. She is right in insisting that truth and truthfulness are not identical; and she is right in her strategy for a pluralistic society.

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But a deeper task in our culture must surely be the interpenetration and mutual nourishment of the ethical and epistemological realms. But in the meantime we should listen to Bok and be cheerful and honest and heed Mark Twain's advice: When in doubt, tell the truth. It will confound your enemies and astound your friends.

JAMES R. KELLY

CORRESPONDENCE

(*Continued from page 579*)

Mr. Solzhenitsyn addressed the problem of materialism and corruption in the American ethos, and he finds its civilization wanting.

JOHN BRANIGAN

South Nyack, N.Y.

To the Editors: Two remarks in Frank Getlein's Washington Report of 7 July, "Holy Russia Rises in Vermont," call for response:

1. "The tradition [of the Czarist secret police and its practice of becoming friendly with suspected subversive movements, like student groups, the better to destroy them] was passed intact to the Soviet successor, along with state-inflicted terror against the populace. and without too much of that addition, to the FBI under J. Edgar Hoover and the CIA under Allen Dulles and Richard Helms." Beware the passive voice, which so conveniently fudges the relationship of subject and object; may we say, rather, that the Czarist secret police passed this tradition by way of the Soviet government on to the FBI and the CIA? Who did the passing? the receiving? how much did it cost us? Or was it an act of Soviet benevolence, of proto-détente? And speaking of fudging. how much "state-inflicted terror" came along in the package without being "too much" for Mr. Getlein? Or should I ask when there was last a knock on his door in the middle of the night? For all the excesses of the FBI and the CIA, Mr. Getlein's posited relationship of them to the Russian and then the Soviet secret police is historically, morally, and symbolically false.

2. "That Russian drive to the sea that the unspeakable Al Haig worries about," etc. It is doubtful that an individual, especially one whose name is known, as Haig's is to Mr. Getlein, can be "unspeakable." The name, after all, lets us speak. The Russian gulags are not unspeakable, and neither is Auschwitz, though what went on in both places may be. For these matters it is hard to find words. On the other hand, for one for whom all internal security operations are more or less identical, maybe nothing can be spoken of very easily. But that's not what really gets me; it's the "Al" in the "unspeakable Al Haig." Its misuse notwithstanding, "unspeakable" suggests, minimally, that Mr. Getlein disapproves of Haig, or dislikes him, or both. That being the case, why the diminutive reference? Is Mr. Getlein trying to say that he and Haig are buddies, for all their differences, and that it is as Al that he familiarly thinks of him. How ingratiating! Or is it—and this seems more likely, I shall admit—that Mr. Getlein is reminding us of that sort of grammar school rhetoric by which bullies twist one's name, mispronounce it, substitute for it a rhyming word that is scatologically or erotically leading, or use a normally affectionate variant, which, because the bullies are neither family nor friends, becomes the opposite of affectionate? The practice of using someone's name against him is an assault on civil discourse and human dignity that was, and remains, contemptible.

Solzhenitsyn's speech at Harvard gives me all sorts of trouble, but Frank Getlein's dismissal of most of it as "claptrap" is an act of pure arrogance.

MARK TAYLOR

Homosexuals

Evanston, Ill.

To the Editors: In Madeleine l'Engle's article, "We of the Broken Body [May 26], she declares her aversion to homosexuals who publically declare their "sexual orientation." The implication is that one's sexual orientation has nothing to do with the job at hand, of either priest, doctor, or whatever. Those, therefore, who make this declaration are in some way obsessed with their sexual orientation, and this is itself a disqualification.

This kind of judgment is shockingly ignorant of the actual social and legal discrimination under which homosexuals suffer. Our society is not neutral towards homosexuals, thus leaving them in the same position of discretion as heterosexuals. On the contrary, it is vehemently politicized against homosexuals. Homosexuals in most places can be denied housing, jobs, and licenses. Most professions will automatically bar a declared homosexual. Government and military employment is generally closed to them. The helping professions especially reject them. The very act of homosexual love between consenting adults is illegal in most states.

Yet homosexuals can "pass." They look just like the rest of us. Nobody can know if one is a homosexual unless one declares this. Thus homosexuals are thrown into a dilemma of personal integrity which is incomprehensible to most of us in the dominant

REVIEWERS

SAUL MALOFF, a novelist and critic whose most recent book was *Heartland*, is now working on a political memoir of the Fifties, the darkest side.

ROBERT PHILLIPS has written extensively on the short-story. His own stories were collected in the volume, *The Land of Lost Content*.

FATHER JOHN JAY HUGHES is the author of four books and numerous articles and is Adjunct Professor of History at St. Louis University.

CELIA BETSKY is on the staff of the National Collection of Fine Arts division at the Smithsonian Institute.

LARRY MADARAS is on the faculty of Howard Community College in Columbia, Maryland.

JAMES R. KELLY teaches in the Sociology Department at Fordham University.

ROBERT L. KING teaches English at the College of Our Lady of the Elms in Chicopee, Massachusetts.

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groups and sets them apart from other, visible minorities. The closest analogy might be an assimilated German of Jewish ancestry after the Nuremberg Laws of 1936 barring those of Jewish ancestry from education and public employment.

The decision to "come out" has nothing to do with obsession. If anything it is an effort to overcome the obsession against homosexuals of the heterosexual world. It is fundamentally a decision of personal moral integrity. It is time that heterosexuals stop "blaming the victim" and face up to the way we have politicized our society against the elementary human rights of this significant minority of our population.

ROSEMARY RADFORD RUETHER
Garrett-Evangelical
Theological Seminary

A Complex Issue

St. Paul, Minn.

To the Editors: James Tracy ("Behind St. Paul's 'Affectional Preference' Vote"—July 7) gives low grades to "teachers" (liberals, enlightenment-theory politicians, clergy) for their failure to know the public heart last Spring.

I think it not accurate to suggest that anti-repeal leaders were eager to teach and unaware of the concerns and feelings of St. Paul voters. I know of few 'leaders' who did not have to be dragged into the campaign, so virulent and divisive was the issue for our tranquil little river city. Soon on in the campaign it became clear that concerns of the people were deep and complex. It was not easy to deal with issues raised by Rev. Angwin ("I am the same age Jesus was when he was crucified") and others: the sin of it all; seduction in the classroom and neighborhood; and social approval of homosexuality.

There seem to be few models for public education on issues of this temper. Perhaps, educators like Dr. Tracy could take the lead here to point out how formation of public opinion might be done more successfully. There is at least one precedent, and that one just across the river in Minneapolis where an inner-city parish was asked to allow Catholic gays to use their church as base of operations, an initiative far more inflammatory than the St. Paul ordinance fight. After a personal face-to-face education program coordinated by the church, the local Charities office and gay representatives, "no's" were in the majority by one vote. Still, it was a victory of sorts for a parish that chose not to duck a high-risk issue.

(REV.) THOMAS J. GARVEY
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Abigail McCarthy (con't)

to say, in some way legitimizes the church in the Samoan mind. Priests they can understand, that priests can be celibate they can accept, but that a church should be ruled and led by celibates alone is too far from the proper composition of a society. The lay leaders are concomitant leaders, not less than the clergy although the power of administration may reside in the clergy, explains the cardinal. This makes sense in a culture where each chief has a "talking chief" at his side, where the "Queen of Samoa" outranks her brother, the prime minister, but has neither office nor official title, and where numerous other interlocking dualities, which pose contradictions to the western mind, are the very foundation stones of community.

Bearing this in mind and struggling to understand it, one comes to the conclusion that the first Polynesian cardinal has instinctively hit upon a brilliant way of indigenization. To train lay catechists and deacons in the face of a shortage of vocations to the celibate priesthood is a solution congenial to Rome; to his people it is a natural way to structure the church. What exists now in Samoa now only in germ may be the shadow of the Christian community of the future. And may be the future when next we are "without a Pope."

Commonweal welcomes letters on subjects treated in its pages. Letters of not more than 250 or 300 words naturally have a better chance of being published.

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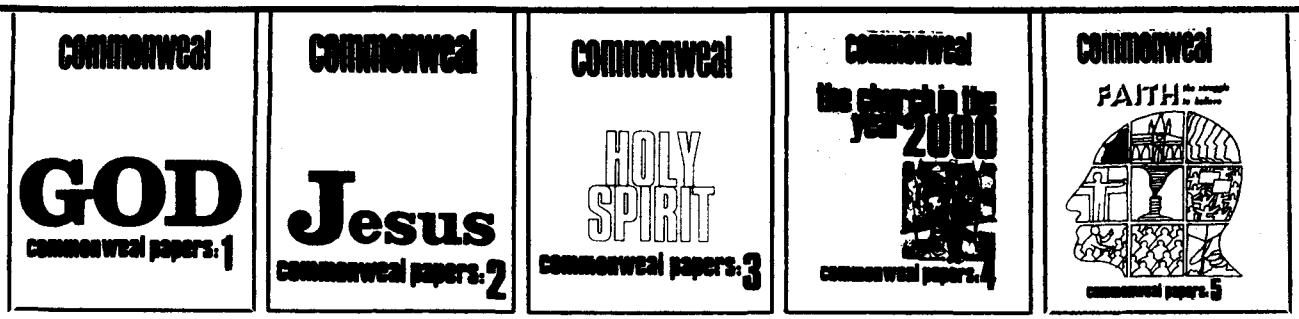

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